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Autobiography of  
Colonel Richard  
Malcolm Johnston

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

COL. RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF  
Col. Richard Malcolm Johnston

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## INTRODUCTION

SOME years ago my friend Henry M. Alden, at whose house I was staying for the night, said that I ought to write a book telling reminiscences of myself and others whom I had known. At that time I thought little of the suggestion, not that I was not much interested in my many friends and very many acquaintances, and intensely so in myself, but I did not see how I could make clearly my recollection of these interesting to others. Now that I have grown old and, like others at my time, growing more and more fond of looking back and admiring the past, I decide to put down some notes which I trust will be perused with interest by those who have known me, particularly those who have known me best. These, I am sure, will not believe that in this I am seeking any more notoriety than what has already come from my pub-

lished works, which is already much more than I had expected, and more, as I sincerely feel, than I deserve. The favor with which they have been received has surprised none more than myself, and it has been the more gratifying because of having been, of late, the chief means of my support, after others, for reasons outside of advanced age, had been cut off. Remembering and intending to try throughout to remember for whom, mainly, I am writing, I begin.

## CHAPTER I

MY FATHER, Malcolm Johnston, was fond of talking with his children about the antecedents of his family. Since his death I have often regretted that I did not listen with more attentiveness. On his father's side he could not go farther back than to his grandfather, Rev. Thomas Johnston, who, early in the last century, emigrating from Scotland, came first to the State of Pennsylvania—what county I can not now say. He had already taken orders in the English Church. Some time after his coming he intermarried with Sallie Adamson, who came of the family of a gentleman who afterwards was well known in the early history of Charlotte County, Virginia, Colonel Thomas Bouldin. In this journeying southward he at first went no farther than Prince George County, Maryland, and for some years was rector of a parish therein. Subsequently Colonel Boul-

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William Johnston's wife was Rebecca Mosely, whose mother was Amy Goode, whose mother was Amy Greene, all of Charlotte County.

My mother was Catherine Davenport. Her father, John Davenport (whose mother was a Hancock), was killed at the battle of Guilford Court House. One of his ancestors, on immigrating to this country, settled in Connecticut. Whether or not he was the same who founded

the city of New Haven I know not. He resided in, and probably was a native of, the same county of Charlotte, wherein he intermarried with Lucy Barksdale. Some years after the death of my maternal grandfather his widow was married to Henry Burnley, who, in the year 1789, removed to the County of Warren, on the border of Hancock, State of Georgia.

As it seems to me now, my childhood was unmixedly happy in spite of my being throughout of weakly health of body, and so continued until I was fifteen years old. The living at our house was mingled of strictest discipline with affectionateness to whose tenderness there seemed to be no bounds. We children were an ardent set, and our parents punished our oft offendings with switches pulled from the peach tree. But afterwards we were not subjected to everlasting talkings about it. Instead, a reasonably healthy flagellation satisfied every demand, and we began with restored love and confidence upon a new career.

Like other children who are not strong enough to be much out of doors, and who must be occupied with something within, I learned early to read. I have no recollection of a time, except one, when I could not read, and I remember how my father was chagrined in that case. It was with me then as it has been ever since—to apprehend quickly and as quickly forget. One day a gentleman visiting at our house noticing me upon the floor interested about some trifle, made some remark. My father said with some pride that I knew how to read, and forthwith he took from a table near by a copy of *Mercer's Cluster*, the hymn book then used by the Baptists, called me, lifted me upon his lap, and opening somewhere confidently bade me proceed. I looked on the page and thought how singular that I should have forgotten every blessed thing the familiarity with which had been making the whole family so proud. But I had forgotten the art. So I looked up to my father in vague shame and sympathy. After some vain



remonstrances he let me go down. I don't remember if the guest laughed. I was then somewhere between three and four.

I can just remember that my father during these times was an active, ardent, rather gay man in spite of his weight of two hundred and fifty pounds, and that my mother, somewhat his senior, had a quietness which tended more and more toward melancholy. He was a leader in neighborhood parties whereat indulgence in dancing was not forbidden too strictly. He was fond of fox hunting, and being one of the five freeholder judges of the county court, he not seldom, when its session was over, lingered at Sparta, the county seat, and for a day or two and as many nights played poker with other friends of that game. Afterwards, and when he became a clergyman, in referring to these games he used to say with pardonable pride that he came off winner more often than loser.

When he was about five and thirty he felt as if he ought to change the manner of his

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life. There was no Episcopal church near by, so he joined the denomination of his mother, the Baptist. Not long afterwards Jesse Mercer, the head Baptist in Georgia, one of the wisest men whom the South has produced, prevailed upon him to become a clergyman. He had had an education much more limited than that of his father, but on a line with that of some of the leading men of the State. And so he set forth. Some persons who used to hear him preach have told me that he was uncommonly succinct, sometimes almost eloquent in delivery of his views, and (what in those days was as delightful as rare) he used to stop when he was through with what he had to say. I remember to have heard him preach once or twice, and that he seemed to be rather embarrassed, even when giving expression to strongest denominational opinions. He was an ardent partisan as well in religion as in politics. I heard him say once that for all his preachings during twenty years he had not been paid as much as twenty-five

dollars in money. Indeed, many of the Baptist divines in those days had more worldly goods than a large majority of their congregations, and so they were in condition to avail themselves of that higher beatitude—giving, instead of receiving. The policy of Jesse Mercer was to make preachers of leading planters. It was wise; it led to the bringing into the Baptist Church of probably three-fourths of the land-owners and negro-owners of Middle Georgia.

My father's conversion, as they used to call it, was followed by quick changes. He gave up dancing and card-playing. Before that he used to make a bowl of toddy of mornings before breakfast, have it graced by the touch of my mother's lips, modestly sipped by us children, then drained by himself. All these were stopped at once. He used to be what they called a bright Mason, once presiding, in the absence of the Master, over the Grand Lodge of the State. But his denomination being hostile to that institution, al-

though he ever spoke of it with respect and some fondness, he never again met his brothers of the mystic tie.

Our life at home was ordered by rules which to our parents seemed the very best to employ. The strictest obedience was required, and its violations were met with quick punishment. Even delegated authority was rigidly ratified there. Punishments at school were not reported, as we foresaw that they were most likely to be approved without enquiries as to the merit of their infliction. When night came a chapter was read, a hymn sung, a prayer said, and by nine o'clock everybody was in bed and soon afterwards asleep. The next morning's newly risen sun would find all, old and young, awake and preparing for the work of the new day. I look back with much fondness to those evening orisons. Both of my parents sang well, and some of the old hymns were ineffably sweet. Yet, somehow, my recollections of the Sundays, except one, were always rather sad. The great monthly meet-

ing day was grand. We two youngest children, my sister Eliza and I, rode to church with my mother in the gig, drawn by Bob, the best of sorrels. The rest of the day, after returning home, was cheerful, barring the long time we had to wait after the first table of invited guests to dinner were served. But the other Sundays seemed gloomy. The children were not allowed to go off the premises, or even to play, such was the idea of observance of the Sabbath. My mother all day long read the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and my father, naturally a cheerful man, meditated in harmony with the thoughts of this strange book. Yet Monday morning lifted the sombre veil and all went cheerfully enough to their accustomed employment.

When I was five years old I was sent to school along with my older brother, Mark. The teacher was a man named Hogg. I can recall but one single incident occurring at this school, which was kept in a small log house in an old field near the line of the farms of two

of our neighbors, Mr. Edmund Randle and Mr. Hamilton Bonner. The teacher kept a large red book like a merchant's ledger, in which he was fond of drawing with a pen sketches of men, horses and other things. One day, going to him to ask something about my lesson, I inadvertently struck his elbow while in the midst of some essay of his art, and this incensed him to the degree that he gave me a box upon my cheek, and sent me away no wiser than when I came to him. He was succeeded by a man named Josiah Yellowby, whom and his wife Delilah I recalled while writing my story of *How Mr. Bill Williams Took the Responsibility*. Little do I remember of the times I had then except the last day. The boys had been asking, and in vain, for a holiday. One morning they met the teacher at the school-house door, where the request was again made, and on his continued refusal they seized and carried him to the spring branch. Persisting in the refusal of their demands, four of the largest, taking

him by the hands and feet, let him down into the stream. The water had reached to his chin, when he gave up. Then he dismissed the school (for it was near the end of the term), went away from the neighborhood, and I never saw him again. His little dog Rum and his wife's mare Kate were as I have described them in my story, although what was told of the wife, a homely female, was pure invention.

My next teacher was James Hilsman, son of one of the neighbors. He kept school at a cross-roads near his father's residence, which was nearly two miles from our house. This man was afterwards suspected of having been rather insane always. He delighted in punishing. I think I must have gotten an average of at least one whipping a day, though I was less than seven years old. He was not as fierce as Israel Meadows, whom I have described in *The Goose Pond School*, yet I remember that he had the circus and the horses. In the latter I used to alternate in the riding and

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carrying with a boy named Buck Connell. The teacher bore with special heaviness upon his younger brothers. I think he must have intended to make such treatment pass for evidence that he was impartial in his discipline. At all events, no complaint was made of it, many parents in those days seeming to believe that education could not be imparted so well in any other wise as by application of the rod. This poor man was afterwards killed by his son-in-law, whom he was pursuing and was about to shoot after a runaway marriage with one of his daughters.

After him a man named Barnes Sims taught in a house that used to be occupied by Mr. William Long, from whom upon his removal to Troup County my father purchased it with the plantation. I remember little of this school, beyond the fact that some of the larger boys established in a room of the second story what they called a "Freemason's Lodge," and that I and several others about my capacity were initiated with ceremonies



that for a long time afterwards I could not recall without some resentment. The teacher was a kind man, too kind, I suspect, for his vocation, which he soon after relinquished. Very often I recall a prayer that I made one day while standing alone by the spring at the foot of the hill. My oldest brother, Albion, just come to his one-and-twentieth year, had died that fall from sickness contracted while waiting on a sick child of Colonel Farmin, one of our neighbors. This affliction bore with great heaviness upon my parents. On this occasion while thinking of my brother, partly for my own sense of his loss, but mainly for sympathy with the grief of others, I prayed that when I went home in the evening I might find him returned to life, and I indulged a strong hope that so it would be. My disappointment was very sorrowful and humiliating, but I spoke not of it to any one. Some time afterwards my mother, taking with her my next older brother, Mark, and sister Eliza, went for a visit of a day and night to

my sister Sarah Ann, who was lately married and living near the town of Crawfordville, ten miles away. At night after supper my father and I were on the piazza, he sitting on a chair and I on the top step. We had endured the absence well enough during the day, but now he lapsed into a silence, and I knew he was thinking of the dead as of the absent. He sat and picked the seed from a parcel of cotton on his lap, a thing often done at night by men in our neighborhood, partly from habit before the invention of the gin, partly for entertainment, and partly because a softer staple than that gotten by the gin was obtained for thread in the knitting of stockings. For some time I sought to entertain him, but when he only answered briefly what I asked and narrated, I became silent and sad also. It was the first wave of melancholy that had come over my spirit. I listened to the katydids, and thought of how brother Albon used to hear them, but not now. Then I thought that the time would come when like him my

mother and father would depart forever out of my sight. Indulgence of the feeling was no doubt brief, but I remember it well, and that my heart was full of that sort of sadness of which we never can speak, never can feel like speaking to another. Since then the fondest to me of all night sounds has been what always seems the wailing of the katydid.



## CHAPTER II

IN THE year 1831, when I was nine years old, my father, leaving the plantation in the hands of the overseer, removed with his family to Crawfordville, ten miles distant, for the purpose of getting better facilities for the education of his children. The school was kept by William Cowdry, a South Carolinian of liberal education. At ten I was put in Latin, but made little progress until three years afterwards, when we removed to Powelton, only four miles from our plantation home. The school at Powelton had been excellent for several years. It got its first reputation under Salem Town, a Massachusetts man, who not long had returned to his native State and become author of several school books, which had a large sale. Many boys educated at his famous school afterwards became distinguished, among them Governor Charles J.

Jenkins, Judge A. Nesbit, Senator Walter Colquitt, Hon. Mark A. Cooper, and others. At this time the school was kept by Lucian Whittle, a native of Vermont and graduate of Middleburg College. He was a man of excellent culture and one of the best of teachers. Under him I learned Latin and Greek with much ease. We lost him in a singular way. His assistant in the school was Miss Rebecca Pratt, also a native of Vermont and one of the loveliest as well as most accomplished of women. For her I had a sort of worship. I used to feel rather sad sometimes to think how much too young for her I was. I remembered this in the little story of *Mr. Thomas Watts*, though the state of my feelings never became known to her nor anybody else. With her Mr. Whittle fell deeply in love, and desired earnestly to marry her. She did not return his affection. So one day, it was in the year 1835, he left the village, saying that he was going to Augusta, the principal town in that region, for the purpose of purchasing

some dramatic pieces for us to enact at the approaching midsummer commencement. We never saw him again. His reason had become unsettled. He wandered off to the West, and we never heard what became of him afterwards. I felt deeply his loss, because I had grown to have for him much affection, in spite of the rigor of his discipline. I had great dread of his displeasure. His tasks upon me were always as much as I could do, even with the help of my prayers. For a long time I had the habit of leaning my head upon the desk just before I was to be called to recitation and saying a silent prayer that I might say my lesson in a manner acceptable to Mr. Whittle. Soon afterwards Miss Pratt married Colonel Boydman, a wealthy planter from the County of Houston.

After the departure of Mr. Whittle the trustees secured Simpson Fouche, esq., a native of the County of Wilkes. He had been educated at the University of Virginia and had practiced some years at the bar. I rather think

that he was the first well-educated native to keep a school in that region. He was a man of fine ability, and would have become a distinguished politician if he had known better how to restrain his too-ardent temper. As it was, he sometimes would take prominent part in campaigning, especially Presidential, and he could hold his own well with the best stump-speakers. As a teacher he was perfect, with one exception. His discipline was extremely rigorous, and he punished with a passion and severity that sometimes bore very hard upon those who were not too large to be out of danger. I went to him for two years and a half, and never during a single day all that time was I free from the fear of being punished before the day ended. Yet I liked him because he was so competent, so faithful, and meant to be entirely just. He kept a list of all the lessons, perfect and imperfect, that had been recited during the term, and read it aloud at the midsummer examinations, which, occupying two days, were attended by many



hundreds of visitors. On such occasions the pride that I used to feel when my imperfect lessons were sounded aloud to be *none*, filled me with pride which seemed to me then eminently noble, and I was fully compensated for all the apprehensions that I had undergone.

At the end of the year 1837, my brother Mark having returned from the University of Virginia and I being destined to go to college after another year, we removed to our home on the plantation. At that time I was almost a dwarf in size, and never having been strong, continuous attendance at school had kept back my growth. I was ready for the sophomore class half advanced, but my father saw fit to detain me at home for a year, and required me to work with the negroes four days in the week—from Monday morning to Thursday night. On Fridays and Saturdays I was allowed to hunt with my gun and dogs.

Conscious of the vast benefit that I was getting from this service, I tried, but in vain, to like it. Instead of this I hated it—hated

all of it, plowing, hoeing, gathering corn and cotton. Sometimes when plowing in the summer afternoons I would keep my eyes from the sun for quite a time, having a sort of resentful suspicion that when I watched it it refused to advance, and many a time, after thus forbearing, have I turned to it again and sighed to think how near it was to the place in the heavens where I had seen it last. I never could understand, considering how diligent at my studies I had been always, that I should be so reluctant to do farm work. I have always loved the country and the sight of country work, but never could overcome the irksomeness of doing it myself. My father was not one whom it would have been worth my while to undertake to divert from his purpose, and so I continued to work with more or less fidelity. When Thursday night came whoever would have liked to see a glad boy would have been satisfied to come to our house. This discipline served its purpose, and I grew in size, strength, and health.

Manual labor two hours a day was a part of the discipline in Mercer University, whither I was sent in February of 1839. At the end of that year I had grown from something under five to my present height, six feet, and had acquired a soundness of body which has kept with me until now.

I doubt if ever there was a boy more green than I had been always and continued to be. I used to be the most credulous of mankind. In my father's house there never had been secrets of any kind. He and my mother were entirely candid with each other, their children, their servants, their neighbors, all with whom they ever met. I believed what the negroes, even the negro children, said, the same as everybody else. I used to envy our negro boys, Antony, Simeon, Ned, and others of my own age, for knowing so much more about everything than I did, except books. Away from home I felt a sense of incompleteness in myself which seemed to disqualify me for anything except preparing well lessons in my

books. Up to this time I had read *Don Quixote*, *Alonzo and Melissa*, *The Bandit's Bride*, *The Three Spaniards*, *The Scottish Chiefs*, and *Thaddeus of Warsaw*. I have been sorry ever since I read the first when so young. It interested me deeply, but not the humorous with which it abounds. I loved the episodes in it, and whatever had anything about love, especially love opposed or delayed by difficulties. I often laugh at the remembrance of things therein recorded, the humor of which I did not then perceive. For the Don I had much compassion always, and I think I was rather glad when Sancho Panza would shut his mouth. The other books absorbed me quite. I love yet to think of the delight, sometimes painful, even terrified, with which I pored over them.

My sensitiveness was extreme. When people laughed at my mistakes it cut me to the quick, often to shedding tears of shame. I took the notion that I would never be able to manage any business well, or do anything

that would be of value to anybody, including myself. But going from home imparted more strength. I had been so well prepared in studies that I found myself at once able to keep along with the best of the sophomore class which I entered. When my father, after leaving me at the college, drove out of the village, I watched him from behind a chimney of one of the college buildings and wept and wept when he had gotten out of my sight. Our home was but a little more than twenty miles away, and as often as once in every two months, after making up my lesson for Saturday morning, I got leave, and walking to the residence of my youngest sister's father-in-law, four miles out, or to one of his neighbors, begged on a Friday afternoon—and was always granted—the loan of a horse for a two days' visit home. The one whom I wished most to see was my mother, in whose lap I used to lay my head as she fondled my hair, a practice continued through our joint lives until her death, when I was twenty.

College life imparted to me some self-reliance, which theretofore I had never been able to acquire. I soon began to take part in the Saturday morning debates of the Phi Delta Society, of which I was a member. Declamation had been ever taught in our school, and it was not very difficult for me to acquire a leading position. I often recall, with a sense of the extreme ridiculousness of it all, the oratorical attitudes and words which I and my rivals could employ with imagined high passion in those Saturday discussions, upon questions of whose merits we knew hardly one single thing.

## CHAPTER III

WITHIN the last two years loss of their property had befallen the husbands of my two oldest sisters, and one of them, Madison Callaway, husband of Catherine, my next oldest sister, died. It became necessary for my father, who went to the relief of their families, to retrench expenses. So immediately after my graduation, in July, 1841, I took a school in the village of Mount Zion, in our county. This I was not far from abandoning on the morning of the first day. The gentleman whom I succeeded was singularly unqualified for the discipline of a class in which were several boys nearly grown, and habituated to mischief. I was much pained by the rude liberties taken by one of these, a boy of nearly my own size and only a little younger, as I was moving among them, examining boys and girls with a view to classifying. Though tall,

I was very slight, and very decidedly averse to violence of any kind. Some of this boy's attitudes were so unbecoming that I asked him softly and with some timidity to please carry himself with propriety. He changed as I was looking at him, but in a few minutes was behaving as before. Again I asked him, in the same manner and tone, to oblige me by complying with the request. The same pretended respect was paid, followed by a speedy withdrawal. I went back to my seat by the fireplace and looked at him. He seemed much amused by my discomfiture, which was plain to all eyes, and I noticed that he had a large knife open in his hand. I looked at my hat, and then I resolved what I must do. Suppose I should leave the house and this, the first business upon which I had entered. He was heavier than I was, but I had never felt personal fear of any person except my parents and others who had right to claim my obedience and punish for refusal to render it. Yet I was almost made sick at the idea of having



an encounter with one of my size and nearly my age in the beginning of an engagement for which I believed myself rather incompetent, to the undertaking of which I had almost to be driven by my father and urged by other friends. I thought how it would seem, if, before I had undertaken it, or in the inception of undertaking, I should suffer myself to be driven away by a great, ill-behaved, lubberly boy. In a very few moments I came to myself, so entirely as to feel much indignation, and with an eager wish to encounter him, particularly when I noticed he had in his hand an open knife. He was reclining on the last bench. I walked rapidly down the aisle between the desks of the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Getting to where he was, I asked again for his name, and then said: "I have asked you twice as respectfully as I know how to sit upon your seat becomingly. If you had known anything of good manners you would not have needed any such reminder in the presence of these girls, to say

nothing of what is due to me. Now I tell you again to take down those great, ugly, feet, and if you lift them again in that disgraceful way, I'll beat you so that your people will not know you when you get back home." He settled himself instantly. I went back to my seat, looked around, and saw and felt that I could be master. The feeling of manhood, for the first time in all my life, rose in me with a strength that filled me with delight. I felt as relieved as dear old John Perrybingle, just after resigning the thought of running away from Dot, for indeed, like him, "I was very near it."

Looking back, it never fails to seem strange that in those times violence was regarded as the only fit punishment for derelictions in schools. I believed then that a better discipline could be employed. Hereafter I will speak of how I inaugurated one. Yet school boys and school girls were happy. The whippings were never thought to impose disgrace, and with the truly educated teachers who had

come in these could be avoided by diligence and proper deportment, which under such a *regime* obtained rewards that nearly all to whom they were possible loved to win. Examinations were the great days of the year. They closed with exhibitions of plays, to witness which men, women, boys, girls, even children, used to come as far as ten and fifteen miles. I have seen more than a thousand at one of these exhibitions on a stage under an arbor of green boughs in front of the school-house. To persons of culture the fun was mainly the crude conception of scenery and other appointments of the dramatic art. To the rest, even to these, the enjoyment was simply glorious.

Nearly all the schools in that region were mixed, or, as it is now called, co-educational. For many years the Powelton Academy, known far and wide, had far more boarding than resident pupils. There were no laws against association of boys with girls, yet in all its history there was never a scandal,

although many a happy marriage resulted from affections there begun. I sincerely believe there was never a community in which the tone of purity was higher. After teaching until the end of the year 1842 I decided to study for the bar.

## CHAPTER IV.

I HAD read *Blackstone's Commentaries* during the last year at Mount Zion. Early in December I went into the law office of Colonel Henry Cumming at Augusta, and at the same time attended the law lectures of Mr. William Tracy Gould (afterwards judge), son of Judge Gould, who with Judge Reeve held for many years the well-known law school at Litchfield, Connecticut. I was admitted to the bar at Augusta in about two months, and returning to Hancock was taken into partnership with Captain Eli W. Baxter (afterwards judge), a lawyer of much eloquence, but neither studious nor regular in his methods. Few men, I suppose, were ever more careless in the arrangement of papers and the preparation of cases. Yet his vigorous intellect and fervid eloquence gave him a high standing. He had much boldness and sincerity in asserting his opinions.

This cost him the loss of his party nomination for governor (I believe it was in 1839), when he announced himself in favor of a national bank. Elected by the legislature judge of the northern circuit, he resigned six months before the expiration of his term and removed to the State of Texas.

I was married in November, 1844, to Mary Frances Mansfield, whose father, Eli Mansfield, was a native of New Haven. Her mother was Nancy Barrow Hardwick, of our county. I was then twenty-two and my wife fifteen years of age. In these two years I had done little in the profession besides clerical work. Almost all my leisure was spent in reading Latin and English literature. After marriage I decided to withdraw from the bar. The academy at Mount Zion was offered to me, so I returned and kept it until the end of the year 1846. The class was large and promised to increase yet more, but Mr. James Thomas (afterwards judge) offered me a partnership, which I decided to accept. Returning to

Sparta in December I determined to study the law industriously. I reported cases in which we were not of counsel, not only in our county, but those of other counties in which we practiced. I read constantly three years, taking notes. In that time I found myself regarded as a lawyer well grounded in principles and familiar with pleadings, which in that time, following English precedents, were much complicated. But the habit of depending upon my senior in the conduct of jury trials I could never overcome. Demurrers or other issues involving purely legal questions I was rather fond of arguing, but I was extremely reluctant to wrestle with facts before juries. This infirmity increased to the degree that I began to suffer poignant anxiety at the approach of court sessions. In the year 1849 my partner retired, to be made not long afterwards judge of the circuit. I retired also, much against his most friendly, earnest remonstrances, and for two years kept the academy in Sparta. Again I came back and became partner of

Linton Stephens, who had married a daughter of Judge Thomas.

On the retirement of Judge Baxter, six months before the expiration of his term, executive appointment to his late position was offered to me, and I was much urged by him and others to accept it. But I, the Democratic candidate for the judgeship, had been beaten a few weeks back in a contest before the people by Judge Garnett Andrews, whom the "Know-Nothings" had put up, and so I declined this appointment. It was understood that I was to be put up again before the legislature of 1858, the election of judges having been remanded to that body. That legislature was Democratic, and therefore I should have been elected. But a vacancy in the professorship of English literature having occurred in the State University by the resignation of Rev. Dr. Wm. T. Brantly, at the commencement in August, 1857, I was elected to it. I accepted after some hesitation, and retired for good and all from a profession for which, in



some of its most important and trying functions, I felt myself to be not sufficiently qualified. During the first four or five years after coming to the bar I took active interest in politics, not infrequently taking the stump. In time I discovered that I was of too ardent a temper for a politician. Once even at the bar I came near getting into a duel with a personal friend on account of some intemperate language on my part, upon what I regarded and so characterized as rather unprofessional action on his. Friends of us both presently interfered, and I was very glad on the next day to receive his hand instead of the challenge which I had expected and made up my mind to accept. I was also involved in several political disputes which sometimes threatened serious consequences. Reflection led me to retire from active partisan contests, although I have ever felt a warm interest in the principles to which I have ever given my adherence.

A week before my election to the professorship, the trustees of Mercer University, my

*Alma Mater*, unanimously elected me its president, despite the remonstrances which, being one of the board, I made. The salary was larger than that of the professorship, the offer of which I had been led to expect, and they would have increased it further. But this was a denominational institution with a department of theology attached. I loved the place and some of the faculty, but I felt sure that the trustees had made a mistake, and that I would make a greater to accept the offer. First, I would have preferred a professorship, even then, to the presidency, having little fondness to the course of college discipline then obtaining everywhere. I knew that I could never practice over youth an espionage from which my feelings revolted. Yet my chief reason for declining was that, although I was a member of the Baptist Church, my trust in some of its principles had dwindled, although I had never contemplated withdrawal from it altogether. Besides, I had not taken part in any of the public exer-

cises of the congregation, and it would have much embarrassed me to lead the morning and evening prayers in the chapel. After the election the meeting dispersed for dinner. Two hours afterwards I declined the offer, and we at once elected another.

The election at the State University had not been solicited by me. Yet after reflecting upon it for some weeks I decided to accept. It was extremely sad to me, the parting from my partner and dearly loved friend, Linton Stephens. I remember always with sweet pleasure the intimate intercourse held by me with him, who was one of the most true-hearted, affectionate, as he was one of the very greatest, men that the State of Georgia ever had. The next year, or the one thereafter, he was raised to the bench of the Supreme Court, and his decisions, during the brief time before his resignation, compare well with those of any judge in American or British courts.

The times, oh, the times, which he and I have

had together, both at his house and mine, and  
in our buggy travels to and from county  
courts in our circuit. I shall refer to him  
again when I come to speak of his brother  
Alexander.

## CHAPTER V.

OUR LIFE at Athens during the four years we spent there was very happy. My wife and I were met with heartiest hospitality, and we made some very warm friends, to be loved afterwards, living and dead. The tone of society therein had long been high, probably equally so with any town in the whole South. The president of the University, Rev. Dr. Alonzo Church, a native of Vermont, but since his youngest manhood a resident in Georgia, was a gentleman of courtliest manners. His colleagues were good men, social, honorable, and during his sojourn never was there a serious dispute in the faculty. After evening prayers several among us used to walk, generally to the new cemetery on the banks of the Oconee River. Several evenings in every week my wife and I were with friends, either at their homes or at ours, when, besides

conversation, we had music, I being a moderately good flutist and she a very excellent pianist. They used to call on us for such entertainment even at large parties.

With one matter in the University I became dissatisfied at the start. My recitation-room was in the second story of the building known as New College, and I was to become responsible for the good order of that story during the day, the tutor, who slept in one of the rooms, having it in charge at night. Looking over a printed copy of the rules that I had not seen before, I saw that professors were required to visit every student's room within his range once a day. The reading surprised me, and pained somewhat. Yet I did as required, hoping the while to be able to devise some plan by which a surveillance so inconsonant with my feelings could be avoided. I often smile to remember how ashamed I felt when, in answer to my knock (for I never would enter without notice), I was invited within, saluted, and offered a chair with even more

cordiality than might have been expected by the most welcome of visitors. Sometimes, for mere decency's sake, I sat down for a few moments, conscious of the meanness of entering as a mere spy, while I was being treated as a gentleman. I almost swore (to myself) that I'd stop such as that. A happy thing occurred one afternoon in (I think it was) my first week. The door of my room was at the foot of the stairs leading to the third story, which was under the jurisdiction of another of the faculty. As I sat in my rocking chair ruminating upon this new life, an iron ball, four or five inches in diameter, that once belonged to a dumb-bell, was started from the upper story, and rolling down step by step, was stopped at my door. I sprang up astonished, not to say terrified, by the vast sound; indeed, I half suspected that the whole of the upper part of the building was crumbling in. Entire silence followed the stopping of the projectile, and presently old Sam, the negro man-of-all-work for that building, came run-

ning up, seized upon the ball, and entered where I was.

“What is it?” I asked.

“It’s a i’on ball what dem young men upstairs rolled down de steps, gis for badness. I’m guine to hide it.”

“Do no such thing,” I said; “put it back and leave it where you found it.”

He was much astonished, but obeyed. When the class came in for recitations not very long afterwards, seeing the ball, I noticed that some of them were disappointed that I made no allusion to the matter.

More happy was another about two weeks afterwards, when I had returned from a journey to my family, whom I had not yet removed from my home in Hancock. I could not reach Athens on the return in time for the before-breakfast recitation of one of my classes on Monday morning, and so I had asked one of my colleagues to meet them in my stead. He did so. On Tuesday morning, on repairing to my room, I was surprised to find no



lesson had been prepared. On asking the reason, the youth whom I had called upon answered that none had been assigned by the professor who had taken my place the day before. It was the junior class in rhetoric, and they had been regularly reciting to me a fixed number of pages.

I felt much indignation at a subterfuge so unfair, and, with as much coolness as I could command, remonstrated. I said that I regretted that a necessary absence from my college duties had hindered their proper performance in even a small degree; that I had not believed it important to ask my colleague to make specific announcement concerning a matter which I had, as I believed, abundant reason to suppose was fully understood; that hereafter I must leave to chance what unfinished business of my own I had left behind, so as to avoid doing injury to the obligations that I had assumed here; that having claimed to be a gentleman, and having passed for one theretofore, it seemed rather hard that such

claim should be ignored simply because of my having quit one profession and undertaken another, and that whatever was the motive that prompted behavior so unexpected, it had succeeded at least in inflicting pain which would have been greater but for my consciousness of not deserving it.

Some time afterwards I said that hereafter I should not visit students' chambers unless I had something to say; that on my entry into them, sometimes, I found them not fully dressed, or not otherwise prepared to receive visitors outside of their own set, and that such meetings were embarrassing to me, more so since it was well understood that I came, not as a visitor, but as an official on his rounds, and that whenever one of them wished to have the place assigned to him during study hours, I would thank him to give me notice and ask permission, which I was sure that I would seldom feel that I ought to withhold. Yet the most fortunate of all was another, which put me securely on living terms.

I decided to spend a few minutes before the hour of recitation was out in reading to the class from one or another of the English authors. On the second day thereafter I thought I noticed in a member of the class a movement which indicated that he was bored. I addressed him with some sharpness, saying that if he chose to do so he might retire from the recitation room if such behavior was repeated. I added that I should give up what I had intended purely for their benefit. He was a good young man, but unambitious, even indolent. When the class was dismissed a few minutes afterwards he was the last to leave the room, and looked at me as if he would say something. I remarked to him that he seemed to have been hurt. He answered that he was, and that I had been mistaken altogether in what I suspected of his action. I replied that I was very much gratified to have him say so, and that I regretted that I had spoken to him with such acrimony. He left at once, well pleased with what I had said.

In the walk that afternoon I mentioned to one of my colleagues this occurrence, and said that upon my meeting the class on the next morning I should make to this student the apology to which he was entitled. This gentleman remonstrated earnestly against what he prophesied would hurt my standing in the institution. He even came to see me after supper and urged me to give up my purpose. I could only answer that I felt myself bound to undo my own wrong as far as possible, without taking into view the consequences of such action. On the next morning at the close of the recitation I spoke about thus :

“Gentlemen, yesterday, in your hearing, I reprimanded Mr. — with some severity. In a conversation held with him since I was convinced that my suspicion of the intention in his deportment was unfounded, and therefore my language was unjust. I said as much to him ; but as the class were witness to the affront, I thought that they were entitled to hear this withdrawal and apology.”

I have been seldom more gratified than by what followed. They clapped with their hands, stamped with their feet, and beat the benches with their books. Then I knew that I had not been mistaken in my notion of how it was best to deal with them.

Our house was nearest of all to the college buildings. My wife was warned against attempting to raise fowls. She did not harken, however, believing that she could succeed. She began the habit of inviting the students, in more or less numbers, to tea, and afterwards they smoked with me in the library. She never lost a chicken. These used to wander out of the yard, even as far as the campus, but it was understood that they were not to be molested. One day a student, seeing a young chicken, took up a stone to cast at it.

"Stop that," cried another; "that is Mrs. Johnston's chicken."

"No," answered the first, "it belongs to those people over yonder," as he pointed to a house beyond our side of the campus.

They ran down the intruder, and a court was improvised to decide if it was liable to confiscation. A gentleman, now well known in Georgia, stood for the defense. The jury finding that the defendant was the property of Mrs. Johnston, it was acquitted, thus escaping until such time as suited its owner's purposes, the griddle or the frying-pan.

It is very pleasant to recall many of the scenes in this happy period. To me now it seems to have been almost unmixedly contented until its last year, 1861, when the Confederate war came on, and I deemed it best to resign my position, retire to my home in Hancock and open a boarding school for boys.

I had been opposed to the movement for the secession of the State from the Union, although I believed that as a matter of right it belonged to Georgia and every other of its confederates. The people of Athens, led by the brothers Howell and Thomas Cobb, were nearly unanimous in its favor. This was the first occasion on which Thomas, the younger, had taken

any public interest in political matters. Into this campaign he rushed with all his ardor, which was greater than that of any man whom I have ever known. He had been one of the most eminent and successful lawyers of the State from the time when he was not more than twenty-four until now, when he was thirty-seven years of age. He was deeply pious, often leading with impassioned addresses in the prayer meetings of Athens and other towns while in attendance upon court sessions. He believed firmly that it was a solemn duty, owed by him to the Supreme Being, to urge secession as a means pointed out by Providence for the security of the South, in preserving its liberties and institutions. The crusade conducted by him was really wonderful. His great ability, his burning eloquence, his entire confidence in the integrity of his motives and the righteousness of the cause, conspired to make him irresistible. To him, more than to any other, was due the success of the movement in the State. Always he held

p. himself ready to take all risks and sacrifices.

When the Ordinance of Secession was accepted by the State Convention I felt profound, painful solicitude, and did not forbear on proper occasions to give expression to it. Heartiest congratulations were felt and indulged among the townspeople and the students, and it was proposed that on some night all the houses should be illuminated in witness of the universal joy. A dear friend of mine among the faculty, who was an ardent secessionist, first mentioned that matter to me, expressing the hope that I would not make myself the only exception among the citizens, and expressed apprehensions of insult offered to me if I did so. I said at once that nothing could induce me to join in a public manifestation of delight on an occasion so solemn and, in my opinion, destined to lead to misfortune. I never asked, and never knew what, if any, influence my position had with the abandonment of the purpose.

The trustees passed unanimously a resolu-



tion of regret when my resignation was acted upon. Not long after the beginning of the next year the college exercises were suspended, most of the students having gone into military service. At the end of the year I retired to the new settlement made upon the plantation in Hancock, my native county, preparatory to opening a school for boys. I gave it the name of "Rockby," suggested by the many huge granite bowlders on the hillside above the spring in the rear of the mansion.



## CHAPTER VI.

I BEGAN this school upon a system unlike any other that I had known or heard of. The class, beginning with twenty, was engaged several weeks before the opening in January, 1862, made up of sons of leading merchants, lawyers, and planters in several portions of the State. At the opening I said to them that I should neither practice espionage upon them myself, nor permit them to practice it upon one another, at least with intent of reporting to me; that no pupil should give to me information of another's misconduct, unless it was hurtful to him personally or of a nature that an honorable person was in duty bound to make public, as an admonition to others to withdraw from the society of the doer; that whenever I regarded it important for me to know the persons and facts connected with any matter of dereliction, I should call them

all together and demand that those persons should report themselves to me in my study, and that if any one failed to respond promptly to this requisition, and the fact should be ascertained by me afterwards, the one thus failing would be at once dismissed from the school.

On Saturdays I occasionally permitted one or more to go to the village, Sparta, three miles distant, without attendance by myself or my assistant. Two things every one was bound by promise to report of himself—any indulgence in profane language or in intoxicating drinks.

I allowed use of playing cards, confining it, however, to the drawing-room and the hall and piazza of the mansion. I forbade it in chambers and elsewhere, knowing that, except when within sight or hearing of their elders they would get into disputings, as is the case, strangely enough, with adults. They were also forbidden to have cards of their own.

Occasionally on Friday evenings we invited

girls, daughters of our neighbors, and, to the music of a negro fiddler, we had dancing in the dining-room. Many of my neighbors belonging to the several religious bodies were much surprised and a few shocked at such a system as far contrary to those theretofore obtaining, and disastrous results were confidently predicted. Those owning orchards and other things which from all times schoolboys were wont to invade had the usual apprehension. In time, although the cost was high comparatively (\$500), the school increased to beyond fifty, and applications many times that number were disappointed.

The school was continued through five years and a half with a success far beyond even my own first expectations, and I sincerely believe that, to say nothing of diligence and advancement in studies, there has been not another anywhere in which veracity and other things becoming honorable deportment were more habitually practiced. In every session, naturally, it became necessary to dismiss one

or more who were not strong enough to conform to a discipline at once so liberal and so exacting, and occasionally one, long used to another, would have broken in the point of absolute veracity in dealing with me but for the high tone among leading pupils of which he was more afraid than of myself. In those years grew attachments which matured into affection between my pupils and me, which even yet I am extremely fond to recall and to cherish.

## CHAPTER VII

AFTER the close of the Confederate war life on a plantation in a neighborhood wherein negroes were more numerous than whites became far less agreeable than it had been theretofore. Mine for half a mile bordered on the public road leading from our county seat to the one adjoining on the east. Like other landholders thus situate, I allowed persons dwelling behind me to pass through my plantation through a gate kept in the rear. All, from oldest to youngest, regarded the obligation to shut a plantation gate after passing through as most solemnly binding. Yet the negroes in my rear, meaning by that means among others to evince their consciousness of freedom, neglected this duty, thus exposing my fields to inroads from cattle and other beasts browsing upon adjoining fallow fields. I then put a padlock on the gate, but this they

tore away, and afterwards, instead of following the path set apart along my fences to the public road, took that leading to my dwelling, and walking around and in front of it, took my carriage way to the public road. After several remonstrances I threatened them with my shotgun, and this diminished their maraudings considerably.

In this connection it seems to me proper to say that through foresight of the emancipation of the slaves, its fact afterwards gave to me never even the slightest sense of pain. While I did not regard it as wrong to hold them in slavery, yet I had begun to feel embarrassed and oppressed by thoughts of the future of both races, especially in view of the fact that the inferior was increasing with great rapidity. The responsibility of their care was always felt by me with much seriousness, and, except by the continued appreciation of their moneyed value, I accumulated by their work and my own nothing beyond the maintenance of my whole family. Often while speculating upon



the subject, my feeling was that if present conditions were not the best for both races, and especially if there was anything in them contrary to the will of the Creator, they would be changed; and during the remainder of my life, when emancipation became an accomplished fact, I had a sense of relief from very great responsibility—never before quite comprehended—although my estate was thereby reduced to nothing from fifty thousand dollars that it would have brought at sale at the commencement of the war. I then had a family of seven children, six of whom were ready to be educated.

At this time one of my daughters, Lucy, a child of fourteen, seeming to her parents to be of uncommonly good promise, after an illness of six days from pleuro-pneumonia, died. Prostrated by this loss, and apprehending deterioration of the white race in being thus surrounded by negroes, I and my wife, who was now my chief counsellor, after much reflection, decided to go away from the place. I knew

that whithersoever we went, unless it was in an unreasonable distance, I could take my school with me. In time we decided upon Baltimore, and in the month of June, 1867, we removed thereto. Having purchased a place within the suburbs, we gave it the name of "Pen Lucy," in honor of the child whose grave we had left behind.

Forty boys (as many as could be accommodated) followed. Here for six years I conducted my school after the same methods as at "Rockby." After about three years financial matters in Georgia, from which came my main supply of pupils, became greatly depressed. The price of cotton—twenty-five cents immediately after the war—declined rapidly to a figure below ten, and I got no more than about twenty pupils from that source, so I supplemented this failing with day pupils from Baltimore. I found it more difficult to maintain my methods now than before, because of less personal contact and familiar acquaintance with half of my pupils.

Yet the school prospered as before, and lost none of its good name. Thus it was when an important change occurred:

This was my conversion to the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. This, as I foresaw that it must, caused the boarding department (now being made up increasingly less from Georgia) to dwindle. I had not, and never had had, as a boarder a son of Catholic parents, for Catholics, as is generally known, do not send their children to schools (boarding schools) wherein they can not receive religious instruction. Although the matter had been revolved in the minds of my wife and myself during a considerable time, it was known to few outside of the family, and when the change became public it occasioned much surprise, and indeed many regrets, among our friends and acquaintances.

I continued the school, however, with annual lessening attendance for two or three years, then, declining to receive the few boarding pupils who offered, I opened and kept a

p.

small day school in Baltimore. This I gave up in a short time, and taught a few pupils in private.

## CHAPTER VIII

AND then I bethought me to become an author. I had already written a few short stories intended to illustrate characters and scenes among the simple rural folk of my native region as they were during the period of my childhood, before the time of railroads. To this period I have always recurred, and I do so now, with much fondness, and indeed with high admiration for the good sense, the simplicity, the uprightness, the loyalty to every known duty that characterized the rural people of middle Georgia. Two or three of these stories were written while I lived in the State. After my removal to Baltimore, Mr. Henry C. Turnbull, Jr., between whom and myself soon arose a very cordial friendship, beginning publication of *The Southern Magazine*, asked me to allow him to print these stories, which had appeared in a Georgia jour-

nal and were not copyrighted. I consented to do so, supposing they were to be my last essays on that line of endeavor. They were so well received that I began to write others, partly to assist my friend in his enterprise and partly to subdue as far as possible the feeling of homesickness for my native region. It never occurred to me that they were of any sort of value. Yet when a collection of them, nine in all, was printed by Mr. Turnbull, who about that time ended publication of his magazine, and when a copy of this collection fell into the hands of Henry M. Alden, of *Harper's Magazine*, whose acquaintance I had lately made, he expressed much surprise that I had not received any pecuniary compensation, and added that he would have readily accepted them if they had been offered to him. Several things he said about them that surprised and gratified me much.

I then set into the pursuit of that kind of work, and down to this time, besides my three novels, *Old Mark Langston*, *Widow Guthrie*,

and *Pearce Amerson's Will*, and other literary work in the way of lectures, juvenile articles, a *History of English Literature*, and a *Biography of Alexander H. Stephens* (the last two in collaboration with Dr. William Hand Browne, of Johns Hopkins University), I have written and printed about eighty of these stories.

To the publication of the collection made by Mr. Turnbull I give the title *Dukesborough Tales*, entirely arbitrary, as also was my *nom de plume*, "Philemon Perch." By the name "Dukesborough" was intended Powelton, four miles from my native place, and at whose academy I was educated the last four years preparatory to college. Of all places this is and has been ever most fondly loved by me, and I have gotten very, very much solace to the sadness of long separation from it in recalling people, places, and occasions—once familiar—and imagining their like in new inventions.

In making up a story of imagination I never

could do without places. I must see in my mind those places which I have seen with my eyes. My imagination, such as it has been, has taken care of the rest. In order to give greater verisimilitude to these stories, I sometimes introduced myself upon the scenes as taking part in their action. This was wholly imaginary, as well as most of the actions in the stories themselves. As it seemed to me, there was in that region, consisting (as far as I became well acquainted with it) of five or six counties, an almost wonderful amount and variety of individualism. To varieties in districts of one county were superadded others entirely distinct in the others. Often when with intent to get up something new for a magazine, without a single idea or purpose in my mind, I have held my pen in hand for an hour or more, then laid it down, feeling that I had about gleaned all from my little field. But not content to turn myself away from the perspective of a check that for several sufficient reasons would be acceptable, I have turned



my eyes again upon the past, and in time appeared before them yet another scene, whether in family life, in the village, courtroom, or elsewhere, as I began to revive it.

In the start I usually had only one or two characters in my mind, and none or little thought as to how long the story was to be conducted and how ended. As the subject revived in interest, other characters presented themselves, and according to my feeling the story went to five thousand, ten thousand, or twenty thousand words. Whenever it extended as far as the last figures, the manuscript, after the first writing, was wholly without unity, for during its writing other characters and scenes introduced changed entirely the current as it started forth. I seldom ended a story with the names I started with, for they also have always seemed important to my own satisfactory understanding and picturing of characters. Thus it happened very, very often, that an incident that I could have told in five minutes has developed into a story

requiring one or two hours in the reading. As often has it occurred that a character selected for certain illustrations has evolved traits of which I had no thought at first, and varied far from the line which I had (but never very clearly) projected. Therefore, my custom has been to rewrite, seldom less than twice, frequently as many as four or five times. I could never feel that a story was finished until I could plainly see my characters and become thoroughly acquainted with their actions and the intent of their words. As for attempting to analyze them, I never felt that I had any sort or sign of gift for a matter that always appeared to me too subtle for me even to essay to study it. Recalling a scene of my boyhood or young manhood, and afterwards dwelling upon it with fondness, yet seldom without some sadness, I have put it into men, women, and children, often out and out inventions of my own imagining, yet in harmony, as I clearly remembered those whom I well knew in those periods.

Several times when a new story was called for, and my mind was feeling absolutely empty, my wife would bring to my mind some remembered oddities among our common acquaintances that would serve for another temporary supply, and I have gone to work again with some heartiness. Quite a number of the stories, such as *Operchee Cross-firings*, *Moll and Virgil*, and *The Suicidal Tendencies of Mr. Ephroditus Twilley*, I owe to her timely suggestions.

I have been often asked of which among my characters I was most fond. Perhaps the two most often recurring to my mind are Mr. Bill Williams and Old Mr. Pate, each of whom I extended through several sketches. Both of these are entirely imaginary, although in time they grew to seem to me more real than the rest, and I often suffer myself to linger in their society, as if they were as real as any whom I ever knew.

As for laying out in my mind plans for a story, I never once did or attempted it. That

is a thing for which I never believed myself to have any capacity. Characters and scenes starting from one slight initiation in a place well remembered, have come along as my pen moved, and the *finale* became such as served to fit the actions. I always thought with my pen in my hand. Therefore, my first manuscripts were filled with erasures, interlineations, changes of names, new directions given to characters and incidents, and others of like sort.

## CHAPTER IX

IT WAS always a gratification to me that among the surviving acquaintances of my earliest youth, even the plainest, not one, so far as I have heard, ever suspected me of meaning to ridicule them, either in class or in individual. Instead, whenever one or even many of my sketches may have seemed familiar, and not infrequently some have said confidently that they knew whom and to what I referred, they have recognized not only the affection I have always had for them, but the respect, admiration, and oft reverence. I never heard complaint that I had done injustice to any man of his memory. In the particular neighborhood wherein I was born, and the period of my childhood was spent, I often recur in this latest time to the high standard then obtaining in domestic and social life, regarding them as the more noteworthy be-

cause education in books was so little diffused. It was about the time of my birth that academies were established in a few villages, notably in Powelton and Mount Zion, in our county. These within a few years rose to great importance, and were widely known and patronized by leading families in several counties. But the rural people in general received no higher instruction in books than was to be obtained in what were known as Old Field schools, wherein besides spelling, reading and writing, geography, arithmetic, and English grammar were taught after fashions varying with the particular make-up of the schoolmasters, a class of beings as unique as perhaps were to be found in the world. Yet those early settlers, some of them of good Virginia and North Carolina families, who had been lowly reduced by the War of Independence, brought with them, along with sturdy purposes, an amount of common sense, and of observance to recognized obligations whose influences were to a very high degree

benign. It was a healthy, fertile region, undulating in small hills, vales, and creeks, and covered with dense forests of oak, hickory, and kindred growth. Living was easily gotten, and mere money-getting almost unknown. While patrician rule obtained for many years, as in all newly settled communities was always necessarily the case, yet community existence formed itself on a basis approaching as nearly approximate equality as was possible to the sense of individual differences distinctive in all minds. Hospitality was regarded as indispensable, even sacred, duty. The most leading citizens not infrequently sat at the board of their less gifted neighbors, and had the latter perhaps more often at their own. Thus a sense of freedom was in every man's mind, and this led to the evolution of those numerous individualities by which that and the region around was particularly distinguished. Interchanges of visits, general rendering of helpful services in cases of sickness or other needs, contributed their part to the develop-

ment of loyalty to every duty, to charitable-ness, veracity, and courage. The people all laughed at one another's eccentricities and instances of overweening aspirations, and equally despised meanness, stinginess, cowardice, lying, and other such defalcations from integrity and manfulness of life.

A large majority of the purely rural population were Baptists. Quite a number of men were members of some church; the women were so almost without exception; the non-professing husbands being as zealous as the others in all things needed for the maintenance of the meeting-house, and as ardent partisans for the tenets of the faith practiced by their wives. Under the lead of the greatest preachers of the period, Jesse Mercer of the Baptists, and Lovick Pierce of the Methodists, was a good deal of asperity in discussion both inside of the pulpit and out. Men, sometimes women, freely engaged in animated argumentation upon doctrinal points, the very subtlest and knottiest; men who were not



members perhaps counting for the salvation of their souls upon their being at least not Methodists or not Baptist according to the membership enrollment of their wives. Among these people generally, especially among the women, was piety that was as sincere as it was in the main cheerful. Many had read the whole Bible over and over again, and were able to quote freely its recorded doings and sayings. As for feminine honor, it was not more free from hurt than the apprehension or thought of it.

The stated Sunday meeting day was attended by all from oldest to youngest, and many a marriage resulted from courtings on horse-back rides to girls' homes when the exercises were over. Among other things, as I recall them, the men as a rule had a sort of reverence for their women. According to the laws of the State regarding property, the husband became owner of the whole of the wife's property. I do not now recall a case of either ante-nuptial or post-nuptial settlement of even

a part of the latter. Husband and wife were regarded, as far as concerned business with the world, one being, that of the latter having been merged in that of the former. The marriage union was regarded indissoluble, except by act of the Creator who had formed it. I can remember the first libel for divorce in that region, and the awe which it put upon almost all minds. As for domestic happiness, I doubt if it was ever on a better scale anywhere else. As a rule, marriage took place as soon as boys and girls grew to puberty. Courtships were brief, yet hands were joined with profound assurance that they were to be parted by nothing except death. The young bride knew that with herself and her name she gave all else that she possessed, and she joyfully let herself become absorbed into the one whom she believed that Heaven had sent for her one earthly guide and defender.

Out of this simple life I have drawn from memory the materials used in my Sketches, which, although in far the greatest number of

cases were inventions, yet are in entire harmony with the real as I recall it. As for the dialect, I do not see how I could make a mistake, accustomed as I was to both hearing and speaking it when in familiar intercourse with persons of all degrees of culture. Educated persons, including eminent lawyers and divines, loved it well, and spoke it often even in the society of themselves alone, except when in serious discourse. There are things in one's thoughts sometimes, particularly upon humorous themes, that can not be put with near as much aptness and poignancy in entirely grammatical, rhetorical phrases. Even if this were possible, the characters that I have tried to illustrate spoke the language that I put into their mouths.

I said that I began writing after my removal to Baltimore, partly for the sake of subduing as far as possible the sense of homesickness. I might add, of alleviating the burden of misapprehension which soon befell me, that perhaps after all I had made a mistake in

coming so far away from the other people who knew me, and setting out to maintain my large family among strangers, by practice of my profession, my entire competency for which was not known outside of my native State. In the fall of 1867 the price of cotton began to decline rapidly, and foreseeing that planters and others who had sustained me heretofore must lessen in numbers, I became intensely apprehensive of the consequences upon my fortunes. I knew well that if I were to return to Georgia I could reinstate myself without difficulty or delay. But my wife, who was always my most earnest, trusted, and efficient counselor, decided to remain, a decision which after all I feel confident was the better. I mention this fact in connection with the preceding to show the frame of mind in which I wrote some of my stories, in which only the humorous appears. This was the case, I remember well, particularly with that called *The Early Majority of Mr. Thomas Watts*, which perhaps was the most popular of all my

platform readings, although I wrote it when most heavily weighed down by a load of apprehension. The work did its part in rescuing me from entire despondency. I suppose that many writers of humorous tales have had like experiences.



## CHAPTER X

I MAY as well give in this connection a brief account of my business experience as an author. My first paid story, *Mr. Neelus Peeler's Conditions*, printed in *The Century* (at that time *Scribner's*) magazine, and its half dozen successors in that and *Harper's*, went with most gratifying favor. In the year 18— Messrs. Harper & Brother purchased from me, for one hundred dollars, the nine stories printed in *The Southern Magazine*, for the purpose of printing in their "Franklin Square" series, along with several others printed in their magazine and *Scribner's*, afterwards *The Century*.

The greatest part of the income received from my stories has come from the compensation paid by the magazines at the time of their acceptance, and from readings of extracts upon platforms. The editors both of *The Century*

and *Harper's* have been satisfactorily liberal in the sums paid, and the not-very-many readings given by me have been received by the public with a favor very gratifying.

My other literary work has consisted mainly of lectures read before classes of adults at Peabody Institute, and at the Convent of Notre Dame, Baltimore. They are about a hundred in number. Twenty of these were published by the Bowen-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, in two series, entitled *Studies, Literary and Social*, and about a dozen more by D. H. McBride & Co., Akron, Ohio, entitled *Studies on English, French and Spanish Literature*.

Some years ago the Baltimore Publishing Company printed for me a work, entitled *Two Grey Tourists*. This house became insolvent, and the plates and copyright were purchased (for what sum I never knew) by P. F. Kennedy, New York. Another work of mine, *Mr. Billy Downs and His Likes*, was printed by Charles L. Webster & Co. At the sale of



their effects by the trustee appointed at their failure in business, I purchased the plates, which are now in my possession.\*

In conjunction with Prof. William Hand Browne, of Johns Hopkins University, I have published two other works, one a *Biography of Alexander H. Stephens* and the other a *History of English Literature*. The latter has been used as a text-book in several colleges and schools, and we have gotten a small yearly income from it.

In the year 1895 the thought which I had been revolving for a year and more presented itself distinctly to my mind, that I should retire from the sort of work I had been doing, and I resolved to do so whenever I could find another occupation. I did not like the idea of continuing at story telling down to the very grave. Besides, while I was conscious of little dereliction of understanding and invention (a thing, through the kind forbearance of

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\*EDITOR'S NOTE.—These plates have recently been purchased by The Neale Company, Washington, and an edition issued therefrom September 1, 1900.

the Creator, common to all men), yet I felt sure that such dereliction, in the natural course of things, must come and be apparent ere long. I had often thought of the admonition in Philip James Baily's "Festus, know when to die," and I decided to make application of it at the earliest opportunity. In this frame of mind, I sought a position under the United States Government. Having little or no acquaintance with Maryland politicians, after a vain appeal to President Cleveland, who, answering my letters promptly, referred them to the head of the department (State) in which I first sought employment, I made known my wishes to a few old friends in Georgia. These promptly wrote to Hon. Hoke Smith, urging him to obtain a place for me. He, whom I had never known personally nor even seen, yielded to the petitions of those Georgians who were his friends as well as mine, and so, after a brief stay in the employment of the Commissioner of Labor and on the preparation of the *Blue Book*, I was placed in

the Bureau of Education, with a salary of twelve hundred dollars. There I have been since the first of January, 1896, going back and forth every week day. The diversion I feel to have been a benefit, notwithstanding the very laborious work, which, notwithstanding some very kind admonitions of my chief, Hon. Wm. T. Harris, I somehow could never feel that it would be quite fair to make less. The first ten weeks of my time in the Bureau were given to assisting in editing and indexing the papers of the Commissioner. About the middle of March the latter suggested that I write a paper on early educational life in my native region, middle Georgia, beginning with the rural schools known as "Old Field." I was to tell of the sort of teachers, the schoolhouses, text-books, manner of teaching, the sports and games of school children, of holidays, turnouts, etc. To this end I read quite a number of books of school life, and upon children's sports in England, Japan, etc. This was printed in the Commissicner's report, and

5. was followed by another paper of about equal length in which were told first of boys and girls out of school, the rise of academies, the effort to maintain a manual labor school, ending with a sketch of the State University.

Since the completion of these papers I have been employed in synopsisizing educational reports of States and cities, and in translating from the French articles mainly upon educational subjects, from such writings as the Constitution, Lavoisier, and several others. Within the last eighteen months, besides reviewing many books upon the several subjects in hand, I have written for the Bureau near four hundred thousand words. The Commissioner of Education, who, besides being one of the most gifted and cultured of men, is also one of the kindest, and some of his next subordinates have advised me several times against overworking myself. But when I went into the service of the Government I had the natural desire of honorable men to evince that, old as I was, I could do adequate, satisfactory

work. I felt that I owed to the Government six and a half hours of faithful work, which I was in honor bound to bestow. Then somehow I never could work satisfactorily to myself without doing so rapidly. Slow, deliberate work at any business always seemed to fatigue me more than rapid. Not seldom have I begun at nine o'clock and been surprised at the clock's stroke of twelve, when I had not moved the while from my chair. True, I sometimes felt the consequences of such confinement late in the afternoon, but have been able to go back to work next morning feeling refreshed.

The diversion from long-continued habits I feel has been beneficial to me. The certainty of fortnightly payment of wages, small as they are, has served to keep my mind comparatively free from anxiety as to income, and the work I have had to do has been comparatively easy of quick dispatch. Sometimes, but only during the summer months, I have felt right heavily pressing the daily

eighty miles travel between Washington and Baltimore, particularly on the return in afternoons. But the Government's liberal allowance of vacation with continuance of pay seem to give nearly all the recreation I have seemed to need.

In some points life in one of the Departments in Washington has been interesting. When I first became engaged on the *Blue Book*, my desk being in the Patent Office, I began a diary, which I kept for about a week, and then stopped, deciding that although several things coming under my observation were interesting to me, they were too inconsiderable in themselves to be favorably written down, to say nothing of the fatigue.

In so far as daily official life is concerned, that in the Bureau of Education, so far as I have seen it, and heard of other Departments, is most exceptional in that particular. Dr. Harris is a noble exemplar of what a high Government officer may be to his subordinates. While he is exacting of faithful work,

it is within the limits of reason. He trusts to his employees to do their work well, and privately and kindly chides them when they are remiss. His invariable courtesy has made him not only respected, but to a degree loved. I venture to express the belief that in no other branch of the public service is done more competent and cheerful work.

Since I have been in this employment, I have been reminded several times, and in a rather ludicrous way, that a man, no matter how old he is, will continue in some things to be a boy. While I have been frequently assured that the work I have done has been even more than satisfactory, and been admonished against too constant devotion to it, yet, most unexpectedly, there have been occasions whereon I have had thoughts akin to those I used to feel when a boy at school. Never having been, since my school and college day, under the surveillance of any, I have been occasionally surprised to the degree that has caused me to laugh at myself at my

own embarrassment on occasions when the Commissioner coming into the room unexpectedly has found me idle, and perhaps telling my colleagues of some ludicrous story. I suspected from his smiling that he saw and was amused by the quick alteration in my face and voice. Smaller and less humane officials would have been pleased with that instance of what is due to official superiority. It reminded me, yet with no pain or sense of abasement, of my young time when, as I easily recalled, I was always the easiest boy in school to be caught at laughing out or other pranks, from never finding out how to dodge detection.



## CHAPTER XI

DURING my life I have become acquainted, and more or less familiar, with some characters in several ways interesting. I have already spoken of those teachers from New England who acquired high distinction in their vocations, both as teachers and divines. The influence wrought by them was rapid, and in most respects highly salutary. Perhaps they were too rigid in their teaching of the uselessness of observance of such holidays as before their coming had been recognized as becoming, and indeed due to the source of their establishment, such as Good Friday, Easter week, Whitsuntide and others theretofore regarded as even of religious obligation, by the most cultured in the communities wherein they settled. It was not difficult with a simple-minded people to eradicate what recollections they had of the pious observance of those days. When I was

a little child I was aware, as were even our negroes, of their recurrence, although there was pious observance only in a very few families. The young and the workers accepted the holidays with thanks, and spent them in repose, or in hunting and other sports. By the time I was eighteen, the meaning and the recollection of them had gone from nearly all minds and their observance had entirely ceased.

Among the men in prominent careers in my native region were some of marked ability. William H. Crawford, becoming early superannuated by paralysis, which prevented his being President of the United States, was retired; and Joseph Henry Lumpkin, the greatest orator of his time, was forced, from a serious affection of his throat, in the midst of his prime, to leave the bar, and take the Chief Justiceship of the Superior Court, which had lately been created. When I came into the profession in 1843 the bar, in the Northern Circuit especially, had a considerable number of lawyers of very great ability. With these

were joined several from the two adjoining circuits, the Middle and the Ocmulgee. In that rural region leading lawyers were wont to travel outside of their circuits in order to get full employment of their time and adequate compensation for their professional acquirements. Francis H. Cone, William C. Dawson, Iverson L. Harris, from the Ocmulgee, habitually; Charles Jenkins, Andrew Miller, and W. V. Johnson, from the Middle, occasionally attended our courts. Noteworthy was the high standard of professional honor among the leaders of the bar of that generation. To a degree they were in some respects, even more than clergymen, conservators of public tranquillity and social business fair dealing. In general, litigant parties were counseled fairly, and persuaded to submit to proposals from each other that seemed to be reasonable compromises. In the trial of issues before the courts, while counsel were not oblivious of what was due to their opponents and to the main requirements of justice, yet the struggles

before the court and before jurors were often extremely interesting to witness. In the last of a supreme tribunal for correction of errors of courts of *Nisi Prius*, issues of law were of constant recurrence because of never having been definitely ascertained and authoritatively settled. Adjudications in one circuit were often different from those in another, according to the difference in understanding and temper among presiding judges. Then, also, a judge in one circuit was sometimes led to overrate his own decisions after subsequent study and reflections or the overwhelming argument of some very great lawyer. Thus it was that the very incertitude in the laws and in the rulings of different incumbents of the bench and in their own individuality served to evoke the greatest endeavors of counsel. Some of the very ablest, most eloquent addresses were often made upon issues wherein the amount of money in dispute was not more than a few hundred dollars. Three or four thousand dollars was a large income to a lawyer in a circuit of eight

or nine agricultural counties, holding two court sessions, averaging about five days each in the year. No lawyer had ever been known to grow rich from the proceeds of his practice. A large fee was a rarity, because the wealthiest farmers generally chose to adjust serious differences by arbitration of common friends rather than resort to the law, whose uncertainties were well known to them, and whose frequent long delays they revolted from enduring.

In such a state of things it was always an advantage in jury trials for a lawyer to get the concluding address before jurors. The rules of court assigned that to the plaintiff, except in cases where the defendant introduced no evidence. Very often it occurred that the latter's counsel forbore from such introduction for the sake of concluding the argument before the jury.

Yet able and adroit counsel learned acts to avoid some of the consequences of lack of this advantage. Judge William M. Reese told me one day of a case of this sort occurring between

Alexander Stephens and Joseph Henry Lumpkin in Wilkes County. Lumpkin was a lawyer who owed much of his success to the warm, often passionate interest that it was in his impulsive, generous nature to feel in the cause of his clients. It often seemed that he emerged from his own personality and became the client who was appealing for justice or (in criminal cases) for mercy. The case referred to involved an inconsiderable sum, but much feeling between two respectable citizens of the county. From the opening and throughout the examination of testimony, Lumpkin evinced deep concern for his client, whom he had long known personally, and much liked. Stephens, then young, but rising rapidly in his profession, noting this, resolved how he could manage in the circumstance of Lumpkin having the conclusion. Passionate himself, he knew how to keep himself, or, at least, seem to keep himself, entirely cool. Eye witnesses expected a highly animated combat between the great advocate and the younger, who had been show-

ing promise of the high career he was destined to make. They were strangely disappointed. When the case went to the jury, Stephens, in words and tones almost entirely conversational, referred to the unfortunate controversy between two gentlemen of the county equally respectable, alike honorable, intending to be 'to each other just. In the same tone he reviewed the testimony, and while admitting that the jury, fair-minded men, might have some difficulty in adjusting a dispute that, at least, was of quite inconsiderable pecuniary or other importance, he could not but trust that the balance, so nearly equal, would be found by them to weigh upon the side of his client. Lumpkin, one of the most open of men, evinced disappointment. A greater part of his feeling subsided before an adversary who had parted from all his own, and was, perhaps, restrained to a degree little above his. Stephens, who (if my recollection does not fail me) prevailed, being told afterwards by some of the bar of their surprise at the little excitement mani-

5. fested by him, answered, laughing, "I saw that Colonel Lumpkin was intensely excited, therefore I resolved to keep myself as calm as possible, although my feeling was as high as his; for if I had given full expression to it, it would have excited him still higher, and having the conclusion on me, he would have torn to pieces me and my case."

Another instance was told me by Linton Stephens, who, when just after coming to the bar, was eye witness to a trial in Milbysville in which Lumpkin and the elder Colquitt were of counsel. It was for murder. Two lads of fourteen or thereabouts, sons of two of the leading citizens of the town, falling into a dispute one day when, with several of their school-fellows, they were engaged in bathing in a swimming hole, one of them, seizing his knife, slew the other. The father of the deceased prosecuted the slayer, employing Walter T. Colquitt. Colonel Lumpkin was engaged for the defense; for indeed he would not serve as counsel for the State in cases



involving life. Colquitt was a very interesting man. Neither a very learned lawyer nor a close student of questions of State, yet he was an eloquent, successful practitioner at the bar, and on the stump or in the United States Senate could hold his own with the foremost, being possessed of a fiery temper and of a fund of partisan words which served to compensate far for his lack of large information. Indeed, when in his prime no man in the State was more than a match for him in debate. He was known to be thoroughly upright in principle, and this knowledge made amends for some eccentricities that in another might be liable to censure. While at the bar he became a member of the Methodist Church, and almost immediately afterwards felt it his duty to include preaching along with his main vocation. Brave to the extreme degree, he was as combative, even after he became a judge and a divine. The following anecdote was told of him while serving as judge of the Chattahoochee circuit, in which (in the city

of Columbus) he resided. Late one night on returning from the church in company with several members of the bar, he recited with a smile, yet not without sign of regret, some of his actions during the day. His words were these: "Well, well! I've had a rather curious and varied experience to-day. I held court the forenoon, in the interval for dinner made a political speech in the court-house square, held court in the afternoon, after adjournment whipped a Whig who had made insulting remarks in my presence about my noon speech, and preached to-night."

He had been an ardent supporter of President Jackson, and in 1840, when the majority of the Georgia delegation went to General Harrison, he, with A. Cooper and Edward J. Black, adhered to Van Buren. In the campaign of 1844 he was easily in the lead of the Democratic party in the State in the support of James K. Polk against Henry Clay. The first and only time that I ever heard or saw him was at the Democratic mass-meeting at

Macon in August, 1844. It was intensely interesting to note how for two hours he thrilled that vast multitude assembled in one of the warehouses.

To return to the trial in Milbysville. He and Lumpkin had been acquaintances and friends since the years when they were in college together. Apart in politics, yet there was respect and friendship between them. In the trial at Milbysville, the State, as in all cases, whether the accused does or does not introduce evidence, has the conclusion in the argument before the jury. Lumpkin, as Stephens had done with him in Wilkes, resolved as best he could to lessen the fierceness of attack on the part of his adversary. In criminal cases, juries, by the laws of the State, were made judges of the law as well as the facts. Charges from the bench, therefore, necessarily had less weight than in civil suits. When the issue in this case, at the close of the testimony on both sides, was to be submitted by counsel to the jury, Lumpkin, after

an exhausting sifting of the facts, and a general pathetic appeal in behalf of the boy, who, in a moment of passion, had slain his school-fellow, paused for a brief while, and looking at Colquitt, seemed to be resolving what was most fit and becoming to say. Then he made a peroration that Linton Stephens declared to be a masterpiece of its kind. Many of its words he remembered, as I remember them from his recital. Some of them were as follows: "Gentlemen of the jury—I am to be followed in this discussion by a man whom I have known from our boyhood. Walter Colquitt, even when a boy, was well known for adherence to the principle of his conviction, for intrepid defense of them, and readiness to incur all risks in their maintenance. As ready for fight as for argument if his adversary so chose, there was ever little delay between the provocation and the conflict. But, gentlemen, Walter Colquitt was one who wanted a peer or a superior for his adversary. He was never one to contend with a weakling of any

degree. When a boy, he fought with boys his equal or his elder. Grown to be a man, his fights have been with men, never more with boys. This chevalier among men has never combatted with those who were not in all respects able to strike back with the strength of a man. To-day to find himself unequally matched, the great, eloquent, powerful lawyer, with yonder stripling sitting silent, yet silently appealing for forgiveness of a vast act done without premeditation or malice, which from his heart he regrets, and he will ever regret more sorely than all others. Walter Colquitt will find such a combat unfit for the prowess of the man that he is, and you will find that vain will be his efforts to maintain it."

The effect of these words, according to Linton Stephens, was most apparent. Colquitt must acquit himself of the professional obligation assumed by him, but throughout his address he evinced, as his opponent predicted, his sense of the inequality of the combat, and

subdued most of the fire of his assaults. The lad was easily acquitted, even of manslaughter.

The northern circuit may well claim Colquitt, as his childhood and early manhood were spent in Hancock County. The family afterwards removed, first to Monroe, then to Columbus.

## CHAPTER XII

THE two lawyers who easily led at the bar of the northern circuit during the whole course of their practice were Robert Toombs and Alexander Stephens. Of about equal age, the former only one year older, they at their coming out almost at once became distinguished, and although professional rivals were dear friends throughout life, with the exception of a brief while, due to a misunderstanding, after the passage of which they were the same to each other as before.

Toombs, who was generous to the highest degree, having inherited an ample property, was attracted to Stephens, who, despite both poverty and weak health, was struggling with increasing pertinacity towards the height for which he felt to be competent, if life was spared to reach. At one of the towns of Taliaferro Court, his home, Stephens becoming obliged

by ill health to absent himself, Toombs put himself promptly into all his cases, so as to prevent harm from falling upon his clients by their continuance. It was always pleasant to witness the warm attachment between them. Both were men of ardent temper; Stephens naturally irate and resentful, and both fired with high ambition. It was evident that they avoided as much as possible being put into conflict before the courts, and that when this was unavoidable, each was careful of touching unpleasantly the other's feelings.

In my judgment, Toombs possessed an intellect above that of any other man with whom I ever had acquaintance. He became a learned lawyer. It was not known, except to a few, that, despite all appearances to the contrary, he was a deep student, having capacity far beyond any other lawyer of his day for rapid, intense study during the interstices of public business and the claims of domestic and social life, the latter never being neglected. In reading cases found in law reports he had the fac-



ulty of quickly noting the points involved, decisions upon them, and the reasons assigned. Dr. Samuel Johnson, who almost never read a book through, was not more prompt and accurate to discover what was valuable in it. At village taverns during the week sessions of the spring and fall terms, either in the big hall then called the bar-room, or in his own and other chambers, his habit was to spend hours in chit-chat, in which were had some of as racy rehearsings of anecdotes and other stories as were held in such reunions anywhere. At bedtime, on his retiring, he would spend several hours studying his cases and reports in which their likes had been adjudicated. It was so in his office and on the courthouse square in Washington, where he resided. Interviews with clients, that is to say, business interviews, were brief. Quickly perceiving the points involved in their cases, his counsel followed at once, and then either there, or upon the street, sitting before the door of one of the stores, he would chat about crops and

other rural things of interest, and yet find time for study, sufficient for the unexampled rapidity with which he could pursue it.

He was the only eminent lawyer who made agriculture one of his studies to the degree that he made money by its pursuit. With the others this and practice at the bar seemed not well to coincide, and so not many of them worked farms, except on an inconsiderable scale. Yet Toombs held frequent communications with overseers on his plantations, one of which was in Stewart County, near one hundred and fifty miles distant, sending to the manager there and receiving weekly bulletins. In a conversation with him one day he said to me that in the matter of overseers he always avoided selection of one with other than a moderate, even tending to low, understanding. He spoke about thus: "I wouldn't have on one of my plantations an overseer who believed himself competent to run it on his own judgment. What I want in an overseer is for him, besides understanding what is good work and

how it is to be done, to have just sense enough to do implicitly what I tell him I wish done. He must write me once a week the condition of things and their various accidents. Then I write, giving instructions of what he must do. In seasons, wet and dry, I instruct him how to have the work distributed. If a mule is sick or dies, I make the changes needed. In fine, I manage my plantations myself." It was thus that he became acquainted with even the lesser matters in agricultural life, and succeeded in making good yearly accretions to his estate.

As an advocate before juries he was without a peer. Powerful before the court, before which his arguments were always brief, he was almost resistless. What, to a high degree, had contributed to this was the conviction usually felt that the cause of his clients was just and ought to prevail. Recognizing on their first presentation the law and the right, unless those, in his opinion, were in their favor, his habit was to counsel against litigation, that after

being conducted in anxiety and acrimony would end in failure. There was not his equal in readiness to accept what he regarded fair proposals of compromises from the opponents of his clients. If the latter, moved by combative feelings, or eager to strive for more than their cases could justly claim, rejected such proposals, he would promptly declare that if they persisted he would sever his connection with them, saying, in his open manner: "The terms are fair; if you won't agree to them get somebody else to plead your case. I go out of it, for I will not be the instrument either of your resentment or your greed."

Thus it was that before a jury he felt himself to be in a just cause and bound at all points for its lead. His examinations, especially cross-examinations of witnesses, always seemed to me perfect. The truth, whatever of it was in a witness' mind, he would have. One who was prejudiced or reluctant he comprehended at once. Placing himself close to a witness-stand, and fixing his eyes upon him, he plied

him in a wise that was irresistible. One day such a witness in Taliaferro Court, before his searching, fainted and fell upon the floor. "Take him out!" cried Toombs; "his travail in the forced letting out of what was in him has been too much for him; take him out!"

When the issue was to be argued, it was singular what disregard he had for mere acts of speech. With him these seemed to be counted as of little value. He did not undertake to persuade. His aim and his labor were to convince. He forbore from praise of juries for their intelligence and honorable intents and purposes. In rapid and always brief speech he commented upon the facts, making the jury understand that he relied for a verdict upon their being fair-minded, honest men, whom he virtually defied to act against justice and their consciences. In not one of the many addresses before juries that I have heard him make do I recall an instance in which he employed words or tones of flattery. He not often spoke more than half an hour. Ignoring all side or un-

important issues, he seized upon the one or two strong points of the case until he had made it absolutely clear, and when this was done he turned away with the looks of one who, having discharged his own portion of responsibility, had left it with those whose final decision would depend upon the question of whether they were intelligent men or fools, honest men or knaves. Yet, except Lumpkin, no lawyer of his time equaled him in excitation of pathos in juries, but he did so by no appealings, but by the presentation of a case of injustice and oppression with such force as occasionally moved to pity and indignation, finding vent in tears, even in cries. A case of this sort was related to me by Linton Stephens, at Athens, shortly after I had withdrawn from the bar and entered the University. It was in a suit for damages, brought by a young girl, through her relations and friends, against a Baptist clergyman. I well remembered its frequent calls upon the docket for years, and its as many continuances, for one cause and another, by

the defendant, who stood in much dread of the influence of Toombs's invectives, which he foresaw. It was the habit of both the latter and Stephens to leave their seats in Congress during the spring and fall sessions of the courts. Toombs made it a special matter to be present at the call of this particular case. I was present at one of the continuances, and as the defendant, after succeeding in his motion, was leaving the bar, scowling upon him he said, in words audible to several around him: "You may dodge, you old reprobate, but I shall get to you at last."

The plaintiff, an orphan girl of sixteen or seventeen years, was a ward of the defendant. She was of rather weak understanding, and perhaps slow in rendering service such as her guardian deemed it his right and duty to exact. One day (my recollection is) she mislaid a bunch of keys where it could not be found. The defendant, suddenly exasperated with anger, seized a hickory and punished her with some severity. The girl's relations, indignant at the

outrage, withdrew her and instituted suit, laying the damages of two thousand five hundred dollars. More than once, through her friends, she offered to compromise on the payment of fifteen hundred. The offer was rejected, for the defendant had no notion that, even if the verdict should be rendered against him, the damages would be so great for inflicting a punishment which in that day and generation was not uncommon in domestic life. When the case at last came up for trial, and after the evidence was ended, Toombs, excited to the highest degree, stood before the jury and delivered a speech, of which Linton Stephens declared his opinion that it had never been surpassed in all the annals of the bar. Indeed, an intelligent gentleman, a physician of the county, who had been a friend of the defendant, said to me afterwards that the effect of the speech on all, jurymen and bystanders, was overwhelming. The large court-room was crowded with spectators. These and all, whilst the orator was declaiming upon the audacity of a large, pow-



erful man, a professed minister of the Word of God, inflicting a disgraceful penance upon a weak, orphaned girl for a trifling offense—an outrage from the sight of which even the Creator, whom he pretended to serve, must have turned away in horror—bowed their heads in their hands and cried aloud. The speech was brief. When it was over, the jury rushed to their room as if they felt that instantaneous recompense must be rendered—even for their own security against charge or suspicion of complicity—wrote out their verdict, rushed back, and their foreman handed it to the clerk, who read in a loud voice the finding to be five thousand dollars. Half of this sum, as all lawyers know, must have been recouped, but for the following noteworthy circumstance. At one of the continuances made by the defendant the showing was loss of the original writ, which, as has been seen, laid the damages at two thousand five hundred dollars. In making out what in the law is styled an *alias*, Toombs, who wrote it, being fully convinced that one

of the local counsel had purposely withdrawn and hidden the original, raised the figures to five thousand. The physician above alluded to told me that after the verdict was rendered one of the defendant's counsel, intending to reassure him, told him that he need not be distressed, for there was no doubt of being able to obtain a new trial, by writ of error to the Supreme Court, he, lifting his hand, answered: "No! I never want to hear anything of it again, the good Lord knows I don't!"

Toombs' career as a member of Congress is generally well known. At the dissolution of the Whig party, and the overthrow of the Know Nothing, he became allied to the Democratic, and was among the foremost among the leaders in opposition to the measures eventually leading to the Confederate war. Next to Thomas Cobb his was the most powerful influence upon the movement for secession by the State.

For a time there was prospect that he would be made President of the new Confederacy.

Perhaps he would have been but for one of those accidents, apparently of not serious importance, but that serve to impart turns to most serious undertakings. At the first Congress at Montgomery, Alabama, his name was mentioned more often and earnestly than any other for leadership. By a singular mishap, Toombs, on the occasion of a party given to the members of the new Congress, partook too freely of wine. The most ardent and impulsive of men, a very little of spirituous, or even vinous, liquors served to excite his brain more highly than others would have been by much larger potations. It is not improbable that he partook less freely than any other at the dinner. Yet the fact brought apprehension upon some of the delegates who had been among his supporters, and when the name of Jefferson Davis was mentioned they reluctantly left him for the latter. He had not avowed himself a candidate, and, so far as I have been able to find out, exhibited no signs of disappointment.

After the election of Davis it was believed, particularly among Toombs' friends, that he would be offered the portfolio which, under the circumstances, was the most important of the Cabinet, that of Minister of War. But the President, declaring the while that he regarded himself bound to offer the highest, appointed him Secretary of State. Toombs, feeling that this was not only an empty but an insincere compliment, at first declined, but, at the instance of Stephens, afterwards accepted it.

In this position there was simply nothing to do, nor would be until (what was not likely) one or more foreign powers would recognize the new nation. Toombs used to say humorously, "I hold myself ready to be as polite and hospitable as I know how to my neighbors, but not one of them will even speak to me."

Assured in his own mind that the President had assigned him to this position in order to neutralize any efforts that he might make to

interfere with his own policy, Toombs after some months resigned and was made a brigadier-general.

It was easy to foresee that a man of consummate genius, ardent, open as the day, would be hampered in a situation so far subordinate to those who were for the most part his unequals. Soon detecting the weak points in the administration, and never having learned how to refrain from expression of his opinions, the coldness between him and the President became constantly more pronounced, until he retired from the army altogether. Long before the end of the war he felt that the cause of the South, under existing plans and purposes of the administration, must fail. One day when a man asked him about the condition of the public finances, he answered: "Oh, they seem to be getting along swimmingly. The officials charged with the manufacture of money spend every day in grinding it out for the government, and all night for themselves."

When the war ended he resolved, if possible, to avoid arrest; and so one day, when notified by one of his neighbors that a squad of cavalry had just come into the town of Washington, where he resided, he retired to the back portion of his premises, and mounting his good mare, Alice, he escaped the comers, who shortly afterwards repaired to his house. Of his wanderings, if he had so chosen, he could have told some interesting things. Failing in his efforts to get out of the country through the west, he turned to the south. Two of my neighbors, Col. A. J. Lane and Major Edgworth Bird, and myself were his escort during portions of the nights in both of these endeavors. Our residences were two or three miles from the village of Sparta (where was a squad of Federal soldiers under command of a lieutenant), mine on the north, and my neighbor's on the south of the road leading towards Augusta. Receiving word one night from Colonel Lane that the fugitive was a second time in a pine

thicket near his house, I mounted my horse and went thither, and we and Major Bird escorted him through my plantation to the road leading northwardly and for some miles thereon. I remember well that as we crossed the road from Colonel Lane's, Toombs, taking off his hat, waved and uttered his respects to the lieutenant commanding in the town. He was accompanied by Charles Irwin, a youth, son of his dearly beloved friend, Isaiah Tucker Irwin, who, in the session of the legislature before the war, was Speaker of the House of Representatives, and until his untimely death was regarded as the most prominent candidate for Governor. They traveled altogether at night, his guide during the day procuring all things needed for his health and comfort.

A few weeks afterwards, again receiving a message from Colonel Lane that Toombs, who had been concealed in a pine thicket near his residence during the day, needed our further assistance, I again repaired there, and we two, with Major Bird, conducted him through the

latter's plantation to the road leading south.

In neither of these journeys, according to my memory, did he speak a single word of bitterness about the condition of the country or his own. During the last ride, for several miles toward the end of our guidance, he and I rode side by side, the rest being ahead of us. A few months before, the elder of his two daughters, Mrs. Felix Alexander, had died, and this was only a few weeks after the death of my daughter Lucy. In extending condolence to me, he referred to his own loss, and for several minutes he wept freely, talking the while on the sufferings which, more keenly than all others, such bereavements inflict upon the human heart.

It is known that after journeying through southern Georgia and Florida, he succeeded in making his way to Havana from whence he proceeded to France. He had been only a brief while in Paris, when one day, while at dinner, a telegram was brought to him announcing the death of his only other child, Mrs. Dudley Du Bose.



As soon as it appeared that he could return without risk of arrest and prosecution, he did so, and for the rest of his life gave his time mainly to rehabilitating the State and arranging a new constitution. Declining to apply for amnesty, his native boldness found expression in public and in private upon his regrets for the failure of secession, and for the disasters to come from it upon constitutional liberty. He persisted in claiming Georgia for his country. He was the acknowledged leader in the formation of the new constitution, his strong personality and overpowering genius easily having their way. The convention expenses had been about twenty-five thousand dollars over the limits, and at its adjournment he gave his own check for the deficit, for prudent investments before the war, outside of land, had saved a considerable part of his estate, and besides he had gotten several large fees from railroad and cotton litigations.

The alienation between him and Stephens

was of very short duration, growing out of some misunderstanding regarding the lease of the State railroad. They were both profoundly gratified at the reconciliation. Not long afterwards Toombs had an opportunity of evincing in a signal manner his devotion to this friend of forty years. After the nomination of Horace Greeley for President, Stephens became so hostile to his election that he established a journal in Atlanta in order to control a more extensive field than he could cover by stump-speaking. It was a very unfortunate undertaking financially. Whatever were the profits, not a dollar came into his hands, but on the contrary claims upon claims were presented, for which, when the campaign was over, he gave his promissory notes. When this became known to Toombs, he repaired to Atlanta, sought out the holders, and, paying them off to the amount of several thousand dollars, took them to Stephens' room, and throwing them upon the table said about as follows: "Here, Ellick, are your notes given

to those Atlanta people. I couldn't bear the idea of their being hauled about the streets, and so I took them up.'" Stephens' death was an occasion to him of profound sorrow.

Ignoring Federal affairs, he continued to take an intense interest in those of the State. Despising with all his heart the men who, as it seemed to him, evinced early and eager desire to be restored to the good-will of those with whom they had lately been contending, and pained at sight of the general demoralization which, as after all great wars, befell the people, particularly those engaged in politics, he was accustomed to indulge in wrathful feelings, to which no man living knew how to give more poignant, effective expression. For the last legislature before his death, he had most pronounced hostility. In his opinion it continued to sit far longer than was necessary, and mainly for advancing the personal interests of a large number of its leading members. From his bed of sickness, which proved to be the bed of death, he hurled invectives toward

those, calling many of them by name, who had degraded so far below the old standard of patriotism and honor in the State. One day, while near the end, slightly emerging from obscurity of understanding, he inquired if the legislature had adjourned; being assured that it had not, in a low, just audible voice he replied, "Send for Cromwell!"

Various are the estimates that have been placed upon Toombs' character and career. One thing is certain, the men who were nearest to him, who were closest witnesses of his actions, whether as colleagues or as rivals, both knew and most admired his genius and his magnanimity. If he had been less indifferent to men's opinions before or after death, he would have left some written memorial of his actions and their motives. He was often urged to do this, but he forbore, and was content to be judged by the Creator and the country.

Thinking of Toombs, I sometimes recall what seem to me apposite words of the Emperor Augustus, on occasion when he happened

to find a young lad in his household with a volume of Cicero, which he had been furtively reading. The Emperor, taking the book out of the hands of the lad, who was dreading a rebuke, after glancing over the pages for a few moments in silence, handed it back, with the words: "My son, he was a great man, and loved his country."



## CHAPTER XIII

IN collaboration with Professor Wm. Hand Browne, of Johns Hopkins University, I have already written a biography of Alexander Stephens. In this memoir I shall mention some things not seeming fit to be included in that more important work.

My intimate acquaintance with Stephens began during the Know Nothing campaign in the year 1855. Although born within ten miles of each other, though in adjoining counties, being of different politics, he a Whig and I a stripling Democrat, we did not happen to become on particularly friendly terms with each other until this campaign. Although neither he nor I knew much of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic faith, yet we both revolted from the thought of proscription of its adherents. He had about decided that he would retire from Congress and keep to his profession.

It was wonderful how the sudden passionate hostility against foreign-born citizens, particularly Catholics, spread among Southern Whigs, who could not be Free Soilers, as their allies in the North became, nor join with Democrats with whom for years and years they contended on gory fields. And so when Know Nothingism was born, they flooded to it, accompanied by a not considerable number of pious Democrats, who, supposing that the time had come for suppressing Antichrist, or the Scarlet Woman, whichever of those might be the Pope, joined their forces.

The central point of Know Nothingism in the State was the city of Augusta, where there was quite a number of politicians among the Whigs who for some years had been disposed to get Stephens out of the way, partly because of his independence of party constraints and partly for his well-known affiliations with rural instead of urban people. On account of the constantly increasing exasperations in Congressional discussions upon the



question of slavery, and what appeared to him growing dangers to the Federal Constitution, he decided during the last months of his term to retire from politics and devote himself entirely to his profession. The figure of speech employed by him in talks with his friends was this: Supposing himself on a railroad train, foreseeing there was to be a wreck of some sort, he had decided to get off at the next station. The announcement of his intention gave rise to much comment, particularly in Augusta, where some of the leading men of the new party declared that he had retired with pretended self-denial because of knowing he could not be elected. Although not vindictive, he was keenly resentful to unjust reflections upon his courage or his integrity. When these remarks were repeated to him he immediately reversed his decision and announced himself for reelection, and appointed an early day for opening the campaign in Augusta. His conduct of this campaign was to me always the most interesting portion of his

career. An orator rather persuasive than otherwise, in this, from the beginning to the close, he was denunciatory to the highest degree of passion. To-day he would harangue to a multitude two or three hours, and afterwards retiring to his hotel, change for fresh vestments those which had been drenched throughout with perspiration, take his dinner, enter his buggy with Harry, his driver, and Rio, his dog, and make for another appointment for the morrow twenty-five or thirty miles distant.

It was the most exciting political campaign ever made in the State. Stephens was unquestionably its most influential leader. Wherever he spoke vast numbers of both parties came to hear him. Know Nothingism was defeated for good and all, and afterwards very many persons of entirely upright intentions long regretted the delusion into which they were led.

It was in the village of Warrenton during a session of the Supreme Court, while the

campaign was at its midst, that the intimacy between him and myself began. I had just been defeated by Judge Garnett Andrews, the Know Nothing candidate, for judge of the circuit. The present incumbent was Judge Eli H. Baxter, a Know Nothing himself, although a particular friend to me. His term was to expire after six months. One night he called me to his room in the hotel and said that he intended to resign as soon as the present term of Warren Court was ended, and he besought me to accept appointment to the place which he was confident the Governor (Howell Cobb) would offer. I at once said that I would not accept, as I should have only a term of six months, in which time the mistakes necessarily made by a young judge would not have time and opportunity for correction. Besides, I must lose somewhat by withdrawal from my practice. Baxter was so urgent that I decided to take counsel with Stephens, who at once coincided with my views. The friendship thus begun continued

eventually with much intimacy until his death twenty-five years afterwards.

As a lawyer Stephens was unequal to several others whom he met habitually at the bar. He came forward after a few weeks' preliminary study, and became involved in politics too soon afterwards to allow opportunity for very elaborate study of legal principles. But his strong intellect, his excellent common sense, his quickness to perceive the main issues in cases, his intense sympathy with his clients, capped by his very great powers as an advocate, enabled him to stand on a level with the best. Then the knowledge not obtained by reading he got in apparently sufficient quantity through his quick absorption from the debates of more learned compeers, Lumpkin, Toombs, and Cone.

His manner before juries was in the main persuasive, yet he knew as well as any the value of satire and passion, and employed them often with wonderful effect. If he had given himself entirely or mainly to the pro-

fession he would have made a great lawyer. But he loved politics. Within only a year or two after coming to the bar he was sent to the legislature, where he continued until he was elected to Congress.

Possibly no man in the State (if one may except Howell Cobb) was as adroit in the management and conduct of political campaigns. At his home in Crawfordsville, near the western limits of his Congressional district, he was made familiar by personal visits of subordinate leaders and by correspondence with conditions in every county, and had controlling influence of its nominations for the legislature and county offices. When upon the stump he always drew a large audience. This was owing in good part to his unique appearance—his youthfulness (as a boy of seventeen), beardless face with a pallor of death, his emaciated body of weight little over eighty pounds, his voice that was as that of a woman, and his eyes that pierced like the eagle's—these were a charm that not seldom rose to in-

fatuation. Above these, doubtless aided by the contrast, were his instant recognition of the quality and temper of his audience, the never-failing deliberation and art with which he gathered them in hand, the choice of arguments and words, the gradual rise into high, passionate declamation got and easily held sway. Fine as his voice was, the distinctness of his utterance made him clearly audible to a larger audience than any other man in the State could have commanded. As a stump speaker, in my judgment, he was without a peer among all whom I have known.

Of his course in Congress Dr. Browne and myself have spoken in our biography, There are some things not contained therein relating to his conduct during the period of secession and the war that followed which I will relate.

## CHAPTER XIV

THE rise of the Soil party and its rapid growth from small beginning gave much concern to Stephens, as well as to a large majority of thoughtful minds North and South. He had intense admiration for Douglas, whose bold—and what Southern people regarded—unselfish, patriotic endeavors, served to postpone the final issue. In the Democratic Convention of 1852 this eloquent champion was supplanted by General (after President) Pierce, an honorable man, but not of signal ability, as he had not rendered specially important service to the country on any line. The same was done in 1856, when Douglas was again turned down and Buchanan received the nomination. Then he resolved to not submit another time to such treatment. For this he was blamed by Stephens, whom I have heard say that Douglas's one infirmity was personal

ambition ; that while the South owed more to him than any other statesman in the North for his services and sacrifices in their behalf, he, as a true patriot, ought to have been content with consciousness of the merit of these services and sacrifices and restrained personal resentment and kept himself in touch with his party. His refusal to do this brought on the results of the Democratic Convention at Charleston in the summer of 1860, which, not agreeing upon a candidate, separated to meet afterwards in Baltimore.

Having never been active in politics, and now for three years engaged in the State University, I had not supposed that such ending of the Charleston Convention foreboded very momentous consequences. And so when, a few days afterwards, as I was returning to Athens at the close of the summer vacation, and stopped for the night at his house, I was much surprised to find him in a state of excitement far more intense than I had ever known of him. During supper he had little to say,



even upon commonplace matters. When we returned to his study, which was his bedroom also, I asked what he thought of the existing condition of the Democratic party. I remember distinctly his answer, which was rendered in tone as if he was on the platform in the most passionate discussion before a large audience :

“What do I think of it? Why, sir, that we are on the verge of a civil war, which, when it comes, will be one of the most unhappy and disastrous of all in modern times ! ”

This surprised me greatly, and I answered that I could not but believe that his apprehensions were without good foundation ; that the dispersion of the Charleston Convention was only because of disagreement as to the nominee, and that interchange of opinion among the most prominent leaders the while would lead to some sort of compromise at the convention to meet at Baltimore some weeks afterward.

He at once replied that such was a vain hope ; that the time for compromise was passed, and

intentionally so, through the influence of certain Southern politicians, among them William S. Young and Howell Cobb, who preferred secession to the election of Douglas. The last hope of peace was blighted at Charleston. The convention at Baltimore would nominate an anti-Douglas ticket, and Douglas would become an independent candidate. The division would make sure the election, whoever he might be, of the Republican candidate. When that took place South Carolina would secede. As for himself, he would be willing for her to go. He had no doubt that in time she would return. But her action would necessarily be followed by the Southern Atlantic and Gulf States. What would add to the difficulties of the situation would be that the border States would hesitate until too late to hinder aggression from the Northern.

Among many other things said by him during many hours, a great portion of which he walked about in the room, often gesticulating with passion, was the fact that the South was

not possessed of statesmen from whom to choose one in all respects competent to lead in the coming crisis; that although its cause was just, conflict of force was being precipitated by men who, from disappointment of personal aspirations, had not made themselves familiar with meeting exigencies that would be far more momentous than they were able to foresee, and that the North, with its far greater population and other resources, fortified as it would be by the opinions of mankind, would go into the struggle with manifold greater advantages. From the outside world the South would get no sympathy, except from individual minds; that even if it should have temporary success, it would be known as the Black Republic, and be a reproach among the nations.

Since the above was written I have found what had been mislaid for several years—a blank-book, in which I set down events shortly after their occurrence, and bits of conversation I had with Stephens. I find the following of the date of May, 1860:

“J.—Well, the convention at Charleston has adjourned. What do you think of matters now?”

“S.—Think of them? Why, that men will be cutting one another’s throats in a little while. We shall, in less than twelve months, be in a civil war, and that one of the bloodiest in the history of the world. Men seem to be utterly blinded to the future. Their reason has already left them, and in a little while they will be under the complete control of the worst of passions. You remember my reading to you a letter I wrote to a gentleman in Texas, asking the use of my name in his State as a candidate for the Presidency?”

“J.—The one in which you said that we should make Charleston at the time of the convention either a Marathon or a Waterloo?”

“S.—Yes. Well, we have made it a Waterloo.”

“J.—Don’t you think it possible that matters may be adjusted in Baltimore?”

“S.—Not the slightest chance of it. The

party is split now and forever. If it could have agreed, either on Douglas or any one else, we might have carried the election. As it is, the cause is hopelessly lost. The election can not be carried without Douglas's support."

"J.—I hope he will give it."

"S.—Never!"

"J.—What a misfortune it is that he did not support the Lecompton constitution."

"S.—Yes; but he knew, as we all did, that it was procured by fraud. I supported it, not because it was fairly obtained, but because it was right when obtained. The fraud was glaring. I feel, when looking back at it, like the sons of Noah when they saw their father naked—I wished it might be covered up from the world. Douglas would not support it. I thought it ought to be, and think so yet, because it gave us only what we were entitled to under the Kansas Act."

"J.—You consider him entitled to the nomination, don't you?"

"S.—I won't say that he is *entitled* to it,

but I will say that he has done more for slavery than any other man in the North. He has far surpassed all other men in vindicating the truth that the negro is the inferior of the white man. And then his name has been the strongest in two conventions. He voluntarily withdrew it in 1852; the same in 1856. I suppose he has made up his mind not to do so a third time. The only objections to him are his ambitions and his countless hordes of office-seekers that are in his suite. If I could make a platform and nominate a candidate, I am inclined to think that I would nominate Hunter. If the party were satisfied with the Cincinnati platform and would cordially nominate Douglas we should carry the election, but I tell you that now that is impossible."

"J.—But why must we have civil war?"

"S.—Simply because there are not virtue, patriotism, and sense enough left in the country to avoid it. I repeat that in less than twelve months we shall be in one of the bloodiest civil wars that history has recorded,

and what is to become of us then, God only knows. The Union will certainly be dissolved. The South has strength enough to make a great empire if its men were wise and patriotic and prudent. These are the only points on which I should have fears for the future. But unless we change in these respects, this whole country, North and South, will sink into the condition of Mexico."

"J.—Did you really say what was reported of you when you resigned your place in Congress—namely, that matters were going to ruin in Washington, and that you got off at the nearest station because you foresaw a break down?"

"S.—Yes; I think I used those very words."

"J.—Do you think you were right in refusing to allow your name to go before the Charleston convention?"

"S.—I do. I did not wish the office in the first place, nor any other. What amazes me is to see Douglas' ambition to be President. I have asked him what he wished the office

for. It never yet has added to one man's fame. You may look over the list of the Presidents. Which of them made any reputation after he became President? Four years, or even eight years, are too short a time to enable a man to employ any policy which will be permanent enough to give him reputation.

“Louis Napoleon, as President under the constitution which elected him, could have made more. He is beginning now to make it. When he has been where he is as long again as he has been already, he may then, if he has really good ability, become illustrious. I never could see why so many men wish to become President. People don't believe me generally, I suppose. That is all indifferent to me. Some of you people in Athens will persist in believing that I opposed the nomination of Governor Cobb at the Milledgeville convention. I had nothing on earth to do with it, neither for nor against him. I was perfectly willing that he should get the nomi-



nation if he could. I never had any doubt that he could not. No, sir; I should prefer to live here, right here, to being President. If I had loved office, I should have continued Representative in Congress."

The next entry in my book was made on May 30, 1861. It was on an occasion when Hon. Thomas W. Thomas, ex-judge of the Northern circuit, and myself met at Mr. Stephens' home in Crawfordville. Among other things said by him, I recorded the following:

"S.—All the Cabinet, except Blair, were opposed to the war, honestly so. They were driven into it by Cassius Clay, Jim Lane, and the Republican Governors. The North, I believe, will go into anarchy. They have lost all appreciation of constitutional liberty. They may hold up longer and break down in six months, but the ruin will come before Lincoln's administration is over. They have never before had any just idea of the value of the South to them. They are now like leeches

that have been shaken off a horse's leg, and are beginning to find out what it was that fattened them. We are the horse, and what they are determined to do is to get the horse back again. Why, look now; three months ago William Soto was worth thirty millions of dollars; he is now worth fifteen. He is likely very soon to be worth only one. Brick and mortar are his property, and they had almost as well be in Babylon."

"Judge T.—Governor Cobb thinks that when Congress meets the showing which Secretary Chase will make of money will frighten them into a cessation of hostilities."

"S.—I wish in my heart it may be so, but I don't believe it. Either they will do that, or they will become an assembly of French Jacobins, and, if necessary, will raise money by putting assignats upon Astor and the balance of the rich ones. The Administration can not stop the war. They are pushed on by the people, and they who hesitate will be hung or exiled. This is, in my opinion, what is to happen

to Scott. The Girondists in the French Revolution led first, and afterwards were put out of the way by the Jacobins. Seward may be smart enough to become a Robespierre.”

“Judge T.—What do you think of the South having a Dictator?”

“S.—It would never do! We are the only ones who can hold on to constitutional liberty, and we must not part with it for one day. Our War Department is managed badly. — is very inefficient. He’ll do, and do, and do nothing at last. He is like a man who is playing chess—thinks, and thinks, and thinks before moving, and then makes a feel move. He is very rash in counsel and lamentably inefficient and irresolute in action. There were twenty thousand stand of arms offered him for sale. He was urged to buy them, but postponed until after the fall of Sumter, then tried to get them, but it was too late. Toombs ought to have been there. He is the brains of the whole concern. Slidell was offered a place among the Commissioners to Europe, but put

his objection on the ground of there being three—he would have gone alone.

“I could not for my life persuade General Lee that the North wanted specially to get back Harper’s Ferry, and that it was the most important point for military operations on both sides. I greatly fear that we have not sufficient force there. Sidney Johnston is the man to lead the army. Beauregard and Lee are best at inquiring. We ought to have Johnston. I very much fear that he has been arrested in New York. We can whip in this fight, but we will have to fight hard. It will be a hard one, I’ve not a doubt. Ideas are changing—ideas of greatness. The heroic spirit will be uppermost now for some time. If we had a million bales of cotton pledged to us we could borrow money in Europe and get as many ships as we want.”

I remember to have heard him earnestly advocate the purchase by the government of cotton, which was then selling at eight cents. The government, if need be, might purchase at ten.

In an interview on June 11, 1862, he said the following, among other things :

“ Beauregard is no general. He is only a clever little fellow. Instead of retreating on west, and protecting Memphis and the country between the Tennessee and the Mississippi, he has come farther south. Memphis will fall, of course. Beauregard expects Halleck to follow him. He won't do it, in my opinion. All that our army can do where they are will be to eat up everything within fifty miles of it. The day for a vigorous policy is past. It is too late to do anything.

“ What stupendous ignorance of the value of cotton to us ! The government and those who favored its policy did not undervalue it, but misunderstood the character of its value. In their opinion, cotton was a political power. There was the mistake—it is only a commercial power. If it had been understood and employed that way, it would have been easy to manage the government by getting money in Europe to buy enough ironclad ships to

keep several ports open. It is now too late for that. Our portal system is closed effectually, and we can no more stand it than a man can stand the closing of his portal system. He dies of strangury, and we must naturally do the same. I think we are ruined irretrievably."

"J.—Do you think that Mr. Davis has any confidence in the attainment of independence?"

"S.—He acts as if he did not. I suppose he intends to imitate the career of Sidney Johnston, the way I read some of his conduct."

"J.—Suppose the Government were to devolve upon you?"

"S.—It would be too late to do anything."

"J.—You would not abandon it, however; you would take hold and *try* to do something."

"S—I can not say that I have most deeply regretted allowing the use of my name last fall. I don't know how I came to make the mistake, but I hoped it would do good in the way of preserving harmony."

"J.—In what shape, think you, our ruin is to come?"

“S.—I don’t know. Our enemies do not know themselves what they intend.”

“J.—What of the next elections North?”

“S.—The Black Republicans will largely prevail. No doubt that some of the present Congress will be left out, and others as bad, or even worse, will get in.”

“J.—What, in your belief, will become of the negroes?”

“I—I can’t say. No one but God can tell. If they are freed, they must become extinct after a while. I have most abundant confidence in the Providence of God, and feel that His hand is over all, and that whatever comes to us all will be by His Providence. Oh, the ruin, the ruin that war brings to mankind! Ruin to character, to domestic affections, to everything good and valuable!

“Our last Congress was a weak and contemptible body. They sat with closed doors. It was well they did, and so kept from the public some of the most disgraceful scenes ever enacted by a legislative body.”





## CHAPTER XV

THE following is a portion of a conversation with Stephens, on November 30, 1862 :

“J.—On what sort of terms are you now with the President ?”

“S.—Very good, indeed. Whenever we meet he is perfectly agreeable. We meet but seldom, however. He used to send for me often to consult. Since the Government was removed to Richmond he has done so, I think, but once. Somebody, I suppose, told him of some remarks I made in the Provincial Congress on the government of the army. I was very anxious for the Secretary of War to be present when I introduced the resolutions, and hoped he would be. I was probably a little severe in my remarks upon the subject of granting furloughs to sick soldiers. I wished to do away with the medical board established for that purpose, and leave grant-

ing of furloughs where it ought to be left, with the surgeons and colonels of regiments and the brigadier generals. The Government objected on the ground that the surgeons might be corrupted. I could not but feel some indignation at this, because one of the medical board I knew to be corrupt, as he was known by the Government to be so. Since that time, as I remember, the President has not sent for me.

“He is awfully deficient in the dispatch of business. Toombs would dispatch more in twenty minutes than he does in three hours.”

“J.—Are Toombs and he avowedly hostile?”

“S.—Not at all; Toombs has no resentments whatever. He has never gotten over a quarrel he had with him in the Gaskill case. It is singular that I have forgotten this case. My recollection is that it was of little importance, altogether too little to excite resentment in either of the parties. Yet they are ostensibly friendly enough. Toombs took dinner with him as he came through Rich-

mond. When the President was first elected I urged him to give Toombs first choice of place in his Cabinet, hoping that he would take, as he ought to have done, that of Secretary of War. But he (the President) replied that he desired to pay him the highest compliment by naming him to the highest position. When he did, Toombs answered declining. The President sent the telegram to me. I then sent Toombs one, to Argus, where he then was with a sick daughter, urging him to accept. He answered that he would consider it; upon his return in May he decided to take it for a short time."

"J.—Has not the Secretary of the Treasury come somewhat near your views? Is not the Government buying cotton?"

"S.—Yes, I believe so. I received a note from Clayton, the Assistant Secretary, complimenting the speech I made upon the subject at Crawfordville, saying it was the best effort of my life. I don't agree with him at all as to that, and was very much surprised at receiving such a letter from him."

“J.—Have not your views of General Lee undergone some change?”

“S.—No. He is about as good a general as we have, and better than any in the North. But he does not reach with the great generals of the world. I mean that he is nowhere such a man as Cæsar and Bonaparte. He was evidently surprised at Sharpsburg. I do not think that he knew the enemy to be in his rear.”

“J.—There seems to be a growing sentiment among the people in favor of a stronger government. The experiment of self-government by the people is beginning to be regarded a failure.”

“S.—There was no fault in the government. It was the best that ever was. The difficulty was with the people.”

“J.—But it *was* a failure, say from that cause. Had we not, then, as well give up the question?”

“S.—No, I say not. I am not willing to give up constitutional States rights. I repeat that the fault was not with the government,

but with the people. Until they become more virtuous and more patriotic, no government will stand with them."

On December 13, among many other things said by him were the following :

"S.—I knew that Douglas would oppose the settlement of the Kansas difficulties under the Lecompton constitution. I won a bet on it from Governor Cobb. I knew this because of the fraud that was prevalent in the election. The Free Soil men had been promised by Governor Walker, who told them that he spoke for one higher than himself, meaning the President, that the constitution should be again submitted to the people for their ratification or objection. Acting upon that promise, they did not vote. Douglas was willing to make the issue upon the first election, but the Administration did not, because of the design to ruin Douglas at the North. As the issue was then made, Douglas refused to abide by the first election. I voted purely upon its legality and upon its being right. There was immense

fraud, but the election was right, as the result gave to the South only what was just and right. If the South had not seceded, Lincoln's Administration would have broken down in sixty days. He was entirely powerless to do harm."

"J.—Do you not suppose that the Southern leaders who induce secession must shudder sometimes in contemplating its consequences?"

"S.—No, not at all. People can always find somebody or something to blame rather than themselves or their actions for failures and disasters. Our people do not seem to understand anything of the nature and cause of this revolution. We seceded because the North refused to support the Constitution. We seceded in order to retain it. The people seem to think that we broke up the Constitution because it was found to be useless. This Legislature abuses Governor Brown because he wishes to save the Constitution. He is old-fashioned, yet he knows what he is about. Truth is, he has more sense than the whole Legislature."

On August 1, 1863, Stephens, while on a visit to his brother Linton, at Sparta, spoke by request of the people in the Baptist church. I put down afterwards some of his words:

“The country is in great peril, and matters will become worse before they are better; but there is not adequate reason for the great despondency now pressing upon the public mind. The fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson was a misfortune. The fall of Charleston and Richmond would be another, but the former was not sufficient, and the latter would not be sufficient to discourage us. There is but one question to ask ourselves—that is, Are we determined to be free? If we are, subjugation is impossible. Charleston, Savannah, and Augusta were all in possession of the British during the War of Independence. Our Congress was driven from Philadelphia, as that city was long in their possession. The taking of cities is but a small matter towards subjugating a people who are determined not to be subjugated. Frederick the Great of Prussia

was driven back and forth over his dominions seven years, having his capital sacked twice, but resolving not to quit, he succeeded, coming out of the war more powerful than when he went into it.

“ We do not lack *courage*. The Yankees predicted that we would have enough of that ; but they predicted, also, that we would be lacking in patience.

“ The idea of reconstruction is now obsolete. Some persons dream of it, especially the speculatives. I see that Mr. Vallandigham dreams of it also. It is a dream, and is like that of the Indian who trusts that when he dies his hunting ground and dogs will bear him company in the world beyond.

“ I loved the old Union. If States Rights had been respected, as ought to have been done, we would have been the greatest, freest nation on earth. We should be so if they were acknowledged now. When South Carolina seceded she ought to have been allowed to go in peace. If it had been best for her



she ought to have done so. If it had not been best, she would have returned, just as small bodies, on the principle of universal attraction, will return to the greater. It is vain to hope for the intervention of France or Great Britain."

On March 4, 1868, I went to Crawfordville in response to a letter from Stephens on the eve of his departure from Richmond after the Fortress Monroe Conference, asking me to do so. I find on reference to my MMS. that I recorded less of his conversation then than I had been supposing during the years since gone by. The following are some of these:

"The objects of this mission are misunderstood by the people. It was to obtain a truce if possible. Blair had stated in Richmond that President Lincoln was very much pressed by the Radicals at home to employ the most extreme measures with whom they termed the rebels, and that now, as the relations with France were becoming embarrassing, it would be a good time to make overtures to the United

States Government on the basis of the Monroe Doctrine. I believed that Blair was sincere and that much good could be done by the exercise of prudence. I urged Mr. Davis to keep the matter a profound secret, and to send some one from Richmond whose absence would not be noticed, and I suggested Judge Campbell. He answered that the commission must consist of more than one. I then suggested to add Tom Flourney, who at that time was in Richmond. I was sent for afterwards by the President, who said that the Cabinet had agreed upon myself, Hunter, and Campbell. I found that the appointment was already generally known in Richmond. Before that I had advised the President to go himself; but he declined, saying that President Lincoln would refuse to meet him. I was reluctant to go, because the President sympathized little with the object of the mission. But I concluded to do so, because it would have been mentioned to my injury if I did not, and because of even a slight hope of doing some good.''

He then spoke of General Grant, whom he met for the first time while on the way to the conference, and of whose qualities and prospective fortunes he formed high opinions. Among very many other things said in his praise were these :

“ I was much impressed by Grant, noticing particularly his consideration of his subalterns. It is a great mistake to suppose that he is not popular with his army. He is much beloved by them. His quarters were in a double log house. I noticed that when he spoke to an orderly he always concluded with about such words as these, ‘Do this as quickly as you can, will you, orderly?’ Grant is exceedingly anxious for peace. He greatly dislikes the idea of a military despotism. He wants peace, and with it, liberty for the people.

“ I strongly preferred a truce without terms, leaving the States to adjust themselves as would suit their interests. If it was to their interests to reunite, they would do so.

“ President Lincoln and Seward admitted

complications with France, but they did not expect us to speak publicly of that matter. They insisted on reconstruction. I urged Lincoln to reconsider his conclusion that an agreement for reconstruction must precede a truce; he answered that he would, but that he did not think that he could change his mind. I insisted upon States Rights. Seward put the case, supposing that Louisiana should secede and be united to France. I answered that he took an extreme case, but if France would treat her better than the Union it would be right to do so.

“President Davis received the report of the commissioners in the wrong spirit. I urged that something might yet be done; but he would do nothing, and was inclined to complain of the terms in which the note was written by the commissioners to Grant. We are at sea. The President seems determined, if he can not succeed on *his* plan, to ruin everything.

“I do not believe that Europe has any no-

tion of interfering. Momentous events will soon transpire. We shall know by the summer solstice what is to be. I hope that among the probabilities, ruin may be averted; but unless our policy changes it can not be."

I was much surprised, on looking up my manuscripts, which I had not regarded for many years, that I did not record what I well remember to have heard Stephens say of a portion of President Lincoln's remarks at this conference. During the interchange of thoughts upon the subject of slavery, Mr. Lincoln, in his own peculiar manner of apparently unstudied speech, as if he were indifferent whether the words he spoke were regarded as expressing his sentiments, said about as follows, addressing himself familiarly to Stephens :

"Mr. Stephens, if I lived in the South—although of course a man of my views about slavery wouldn't be allowed to live there—still, if I did, it seems to me that I would counsel owners of slaves to decide upon some

time when they would be emancipated: say twenty years, thirty years, or even fifty years. But to fix upon some certain date for which they could make timely preparation."

Entirely clear interpretation of these words can not be given, but they seem to indicate that if the South would agree to reunion, favorable, even liberal, treatment of the slavery question would have been accorded in so far as it might be influenced by President Lincoln. He exhibited during the conference earnest desire for the composition of existing disputes. I have seen it stated that he proposed to the commissioners that, after writing upon a blank page the word "Reunion" they might insert the rest. I have no idea that this is true. Nothing like it was said by Stephens to me, with whom he held closest intimacy.

## CHAPTER XVI

MR. STEPHENS had resolved that in the event of failure of the Confederate cause he would not avoid capture by the United States Government. Providing himself with what amount of gold he could get for allowable extra expenses in prison he remained at home, awaiting those who were to be sent for his arrest. During his imprisonment at Fortress Monroe he kept a diary, intended only for his brother Linton and myself. It contained some two hundred pages, with observations partly upon the occurrences of his life therein and upon philosophical and literary subjects. This MS. is now in possession of a member of his family.

It seemed an unbecoming severity in placing so frail a man in a low, damp room. Therein he contracted the rheumatism, which

remained throughout the rest of his life. When I met him upon his release several months afterwards he had grown quite gray and otherwise aged much.

Upon his return he determined to exert his whole influence in counseling his people in the way of reconstruction. He sorely regretted the death of President Lincoln, regarding it a great calamity to the whole country, particularly the South. It was but an added great misfortune that his successor was a Southern man. Him the Southern people never liked, and the policy of reconstruction adopted by him they detested. He made the mistake not uncommon with men in his condition of bestowing amnesty upon the great body of Confederates and withholding it from its leaders. In this he showed that he was entirely ignorant of the Southern people. Imprisonment of those whom they had most trusted, both in peace and in war, alienated them further and further from him, who had vainly expected to form a party for himself by



such action. The exclusion from Congress of such men as Herschel Johnston and Alexander Stephen, and the acceptance of such as Foster, Blodget and his likes could not but serve to exasperate a brave people. Yet, while Toombs, defiant to the last, kept himself aloof, Stephens entered heartily into the midst of existing conditions, counseling compliance with the inevitable, and endeavored to make all that was possible out of it. He could not ally himself, as some did, with the Republican party; but he could commend patience that he practiced himself.

The following is the last extract that I shall make from these MSS. They record a portion of the conversation had with him December 4, 1866:

“Nothing could have been worse than secession as a means of obtaining redress for the violated rights of the South. Congress was against Lincoln, and would have rendered any unlawful action nugatory. We were in the fort and the enemy outside. We left it in order

to fight him outside. We have been conquered, and are now trying to get back into the fort and can not. We are like a man who had a gun, while his enemy was unarmed, and who gave up his weapon.

“I used to have great confidence in the good sense of the people, but I begin to fear that they are not competent to cope with the great difficulties before them. The white people of the South are slow in being brought to see the necessity of doing justice to the negro. The education of the latter is now absolutely necessary in order to make him useful to the white man. If we had risen at once to the full view of all the necessities attending the emancipation of the negro, we should have been in the Union long ago. It is hard to get our people to the point where they can do the negro full justice. I see it stated that General Grant has been advising the President to urge upon the South the adoption of the Constitutional Amendments.

“I think Grant is in favor of the Amend-

ments. He is an unsophisticated man.\* He does not see the consequences of the Amendments. He believes that the enfranchisement of the Southern whites would soon follow its adoption."

"J.—Do you not suspect now that he is beginning to grow ambitious?"

"S.—General Grant is combative. We made the mistake of not cultivating him. He is destined to play an important part in the future history of this country."

I saw much of Stephens during his last years in Congress. He often appealed to me, in tones that were not easy to resist, to come to his rooms in the National Hotel on Saturday and remain until Sunday evening. This, often inconvenient as it was, I did about once a month. On Saturday night at the coming in of other guests we had whist, of which he was more fond than any person I ever knew. He and I were never partners, and had not been in twenty years. I always was surprised at the enjoyment in the game by one who

could become so angrily excited by a misplay of his partner. Many years ago, at one of these on my part, his language was so offensive that, throwing down my hand, among other things I declared that I would never again be his partner in the game.

At ten o'clock, after the departure of the other guests, he and I withdrew into his bedroom, where, after being undressed and lifted into bed by Aleck, a negro who had taken the place left by Harry's death, his pipe was lighted, and generally I read aloud to him until he fell asleep.

Sundays he had eight or ten guests to meet me to dinner in his front room. To my remonstrances against the needless expenditure, which he could not afford to undergo, he would answer about thus: "Ah, well! we can not be together much longer." Later in the afternoon I left to return home. It happened very often that immediately after my departure, he wrote to me, sometimes a long letter, telling me of his gratification at my

visit and the sadness of bidding me good-bye.

Several times he had long, dangerous spells of sickness, and not unfrequently suspected that he was near his end. During these seasons I went, at his pathetic request, to Washington at night, returning in time for my school next morning. Times not to be counted have I heard him crying, with the feeling and voice of a child, at being left alone in the world, without parents, brothers, or sisters; indeed, of all persons whom I have ever known, his natural affections seemed to me the most passionate.

There are many things that I could tell of how he was beset and, as it were, robbed, during those years in Washington, by beggars, from the well-dressed to the squalid—beggars of all sorts, kinds, sexes, and conditions. From these he was absolutely without power to tear himself away, and so his pockets, in a brief while, often were emptied to a few dollars or cents, which, as he used to say, he would keep for seed.

At his Sunday dinners, besides several of the Georgia members, I sometimes met distinguished officials—Davis, of the Supreme Court; General Ewing, Senators Beck and Blackburn, and others. He was a good host, learning easily how to accommodate himself to every individual.

On my arrival one Saturday morning he was preparing to take a party of several Georgians for a call upon President Grant. He and the rest persuaded me to go along with them. In a few minutes after being shown to a room, wherein was a long table, the President entered, and after introductions, sat down at the head of the table and spoke not a word. His face seemed somewhat flushed, his eyes dull, and his linen collar rather drooping. Stephens addressed several observations, which, after lifting his eyes from their recumbent position, Grant answered briefly, and let down his eyes again. The only remark of Stephens which seemed to interest him, and that only slightly, was an allusion made by the former to a very

severe criticism upon him that had appeared that morning in the *New York Sun*. Grant, bringing his eyes to a level, answered in about these words: "No; I never read anything in that paper. The proprietor, shortly after my coming into office, applied to me for an office. I didn't give it to him because I didn't think he was fit for it. Ever since then his paper has been abusing me; but I never open its pages."

Stephens did not take very well my rather teasing him for the President's silence and apparent indifference to all his callers. With slight petulance he answered: "Grant is just as I've frequently told people—he never *talks* unless he has something to *say!*"

I could not but smile at a reply that I thought I could make with some aptness, but I said no more because it was evident that he felt rather disappointed.

He survived his inauguration as Governor but a few weeks. It seemed fit that his last official act was signing the pardon of a con-

vict. The remnants of the hundreds of thousands gotten by his work was about enough for the payment to Linton's estate of the sum advanced to start his journal in the Greeley campaign.

I thought it as well to record some of the parts of the many conversations we had together during the war, a very small portion of which I wrote down at the time of their occurrence. During that whole period he suffered often with much intensity from apprehensions of results of a revolution unwisely brought on and conducted. In time he lost almost all confidence in President Davis, regarding him as narrow, shortsighted, willful, arrogant, and resentful, long before it came, doomed to entire failure. Very many things he said to me privately on several matters in his public policy, and other things which I did not record then and which I will not record now.

After the return from Fortress Monroe, it behooving him to get some sort of income for



the maintenance of his very expensive family, not being able to follow the circuit as before, he accepted an offer from an agent of the United States Publishing Company, of Philadelphia, to write a history, which he styled "A History of the War Between the States." Its success as a selling book was great, bringing him perhaps, if any, only a little less than a hundred thousand dollars. This money, like the first that came and continued to come from other sources, went in the way of keeping to the last as from the first, in uncounted bestowment of charities, and keeping a house ever open at all hours, day and night, to visitors of every degree, from near and from afar, known and unknown, heard of and unheard of. It was really pathetic to his nearest people and friends, even a matter of some resentment now. As some expressed it, he was eaten up by appeals for help which, although in far the greatest cases were little meritorious, he could no more turn away from than a mother could endure without feeling the moanings of her sick child.

His household continued to the last as before. His farm negroes rented at small cost the land, and his man-servant, Harry, and his family attended to affairs at the mansion. The three persons most dear to him were his brother Linton, his nephew William Stephens (son of his brother John), and Harry. The deaths of all of those, particularly Linton, the pride of his life, broke his heart. On a visit I paid a year or so afterwards, he was in great prostration of spirit. Among many other things, I remember his saying, while speaking of his death, about thus: "If I could have it as I wish, I would prefer being carried alone to the grave by the negroes with torches and be buried at night." Yet the necessity of bracing himself against utter despondency, and what was as urgent, that of continuing his hospitalities and charities, forced him to re-enter politics, of his subsequent career in which it is not needful to speak. He secured the nomination for Governor with a satisfaction that he did not express to others—indeed

endeavoring, I suspected, to keep it out of his own consciousness. He asked me to come to Washington on the day of his departure, and be the last to take leave of him. After shaking hands with all, among whom I am sure there were at least twenty of the hotel servants, every one of whom got a parting gift, we entered a carriage, and were driven over several streets, his face indicating profoundest sadness as he looked, knowing it was for the last time, upon buildings very familiar to him. As we passed one of these, on my asking what it was, he answered, "That is the jail! Do you know that it makes me sick at heart to look at a jail? The misery endured there from false charges, neglect, from despotic treatment and myriad forms of wrong and outrage, make me sick in my heart to think of." Among other things he said: "I ought not to have accepted this nomination. I tell you I'm worn out. I sometimes feel like I wish, and that I ought to pray, that Gartrell [General Lucius Gartrell, his opponent] would beat me."

In this there was no doubt in his mind that he deluded himself. His defeat would have mortified him more than anything that ever occurred to his personal history.

Regarding it from every point of view, the being of Alexander Stephens seemed to me the most unique of all with which I have been acquainted. Extremes were more distant from each other, with many various means between. The wise man that he became kept within him very much of the little child. His native irascibility showed itself in middle age and old as in childhood and youth. An offense, or what he took to be such, roused instant resentment with desire to fight. He challenged to the duel consecutively Herschel (afterwards Governor) Johnston and Benjamin (afterwards United States Senator) Hill. His pride, perhaps rather I should say his vanity, was as exquisitely sensitive to slight, real or apparent, as his own suffering body was to a new, sudden pain. Yet of all men he was the most ready to forgive an enemy.













